DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 340 464 PS 020 063

AUTHOR Hardacre, Jennifer F.
TITLE Increasing Teachers' Competence in Observing, Assessing and Reporting Children's Play in Education Settings.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 113p.; Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Child Development; Dramatic Play; Early Childhood Education; *Elementary School Teachers; Higher Education; *Inservice Teacher Education; *Learning Experience; *Observation; *Play; Questionnaires; Student Behavior; Student Evaluation; Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Improvement; Teacher Workshops
IDENTIFIERS *Developmentally Appropriate Programs

ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to develop learning experiences for teachers which would improve their ability to be accountable for children's progress in play-oriented educational programs. The primary objective was to increase teachers' competence with regard to knowledge about play, and their skill in assessing and reporting developmental progress revealed in play. Additional goals were to increase teachers' confidence in running a play-oriented, developmentally appropriate progam; in justifying and explaining such a program to critics; and in enhancing children's play in the program. The researcher administered a needs assessment questionnaire to teachers; developed a series of learning experiences based on research; carried out inservice for several groups of teachers amounting to about 250 persons in all; and developed and administered an evaluation component. Results of the practicum were positive. Data analysis revealed that teachers expressed increased confidence in their knowledge about play and their ability to assess and report it. They indicated that they felt more encouraged to run developmentally appropriate programs and to justify and explain such programs to those concerned about them. Recommendations for improvement of the project are suggested, and plans for future in-service programs are provided. A list of 66 references is included and related project materials are appended. (Author/GLR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED340464

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Increasing Teachers' Competence in Observing, Assessing and Reporting Children's Play in Education Settings

by

Jennifer F. Hardacre

Cluster 28

A Practicum II Report presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY
1991

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Jennifer F. Hardacre

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PS 020063

Practicum Approval Sheet

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Carl Corter
Carl Corter, Ph.D.

Department Chair
Title

Institute of Child Study, Faculty of Education, University of Toronto, Ontario.

28 Aug. 1991
Date

This practicum report was submitted by Jennifer Hardacre under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

9/4/91
Date of Final Approval of Report

Victoria Dimidjian, Ph.D.
Adviser

Acknowledgements

I would like to express appreciation to my adviser, Dr. Victoria Dimidjian for her careful and constructive criticism, to consultants Ina Mary Rutherford, Anne Ellis, Carol Hara, Roz Doctorow, Maria Cantalini-Williams and Valerie Sterling for their cooperation in arranging the in-service, and to all the teachers who participated in the workshops and from whom I learned so much.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....iv

LIST OF TABLES.....v

Chapter Page

I INTRODUCTION.....1

Description of Work Setting and Community.....1
Writer's Work Setting and Role.....2

II STUDY OF THE PROBLEM.....4

Problem Description.....4
Causative Analysis.....7
Problem Documentation.....11
Relationship of the Problem to the Literature.....16

III ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS.....25

Goals and Expectations.....25
Behavioral Objectives.....25
Instrumentation.....27
Description of Plans to Analyze Results.....27

IV SOLUTION STRATEGY.....28

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions.....28
Description and Justification of Solution Selected.....49
Report of Action Taken.....58

V RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....70

Results.....70
Conclusions.....79
Recommendations.....80
Plans and Dissemination.....81

REFERENCES.....83

Appendices

A PLAY SURVEY.....89

B PLAY INSERVICE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONAIRE.....92

C BIBLIOGRAPHY ON CHILDREN'S PLAY.....94

D "PLAY'- A FOUR LETTER WORD.....96

E CLOSURE/ADVANCE ORGANIZER.....98

F PROPOSED ELECTIVE COURSE.....100
G SUMMER COURSE FLYER.....104

H SUMMER COURSE COVERING LETTER.....106

I SUMMER CONCERNS RESPONSE FORM.....108

J HOMEWORK 1.....110

K HOMEWORK 2.....112

L ICS COURSE EVALUATION SHEET.....114

M WRITTEN ANSWER SHEET.....119

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1 Responses to Choices in Questionaire Items 1,2,3,4 Board A.....13

2 Responses to Choices in Questionaire Items 1,2,3,4 Board B.....14

3 Responses to Choices in Questionaire Items 1,2,3,4 Board C.....15

4 Number of Responses to Choices in Questionaire. Board A.....71

5 Number of Responses to Choices in Questionaire. Board B.....72

6 Number of Responses to Choices in Questionaire. Board D.....73

7 Number of Responses to Choices in Questionaire. Board E, 1.....75

8 Number of Responses to Choices in Questionaire. Board E, 2.....76

9 Number of Responses to Choices in Questionaire. Summer.....78

ABSTRACT

Increasing Teachers' Competence in Observing, Assessing and Reporting Children's Play in Educational Settings. Hardacre, Jennifer F., 1991: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood.
Descriptors: Teacher/Competency/Teacher Competency/Primary Education/Elementary Education/Preschool Education/Observation/Assessment/Reporting/Play/Inservice Education

This practicum was designed to develop learning experiences for teachers which would improve their ability to be credibly accountable for children's progress in play-oriented educational programs. The primary objective was to increase teachers' competence with regard to knowledge about play and skill in assessing and reporting it. Additional goals were to increase teachers' confidence about running a play-oriented, developmentally appropriate program, in justifying and explaining such a program to critics, and in enhancing the play of children in the program, and to design learning experiences which would effectively meet the needs of practitioners.

The writer administered a needs assessment to teachers by means of a questionaire; developed a series of learning experiences based upon research on effective inservice education and research on children's play; carried out inservice for several groups of teachers amounting to about 250 individuals in all, and developed and administered an evaluation component.

The results of the practicum were positive. Analysis of the data revealed that teachers expressed increased confidence in their knowledge about play and their ability to assess and report it. They indicated that they felt more encouraged to run developmentally appropriate (play-oriented) programs, and to justify and explain such programs to concerned others.

****

Permission Statement

As a student in the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood, I do (✓) do not ( ) give permission to Nova University to distribute copies of this practicum report on request from interested individuals. It is my understanding that Nova University will not charge for this dissemination except to cover the costs of microfiching, handling, and mailing of the materials.

August 5, 1991 — Jennifer Hardacre
(date) (signature)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The setting in which this problem occurs consists of several school board jurisdictions in the southern part of an eastern Canadian province. The school board areas vary in their characteristics. Some are predominantly rural, with a few large towns and many small villages and hamlets among the farms. Others lie within a major metropolitan area and are entirely urban. Some boards are close to universities and colleges, making it relatively easy for administrators to arrange in-service utilizing university expertise. Others lie far from such resources, with corresponding difficulty in doing the same. In two of the boards in question, the setting up of Junior Kindergartens has just been mandated, necessitating the recruitment and preparation of staff for these classes.

The population of the rural boards is predominantly caucasian and English speaking, although in the larger towns there are small numbers of non-English speaking recent immigrants, most from southeast Asia, the Indian sub-continent, the Middle East, and South and Central America. In the urban boards, there are areas in which well over fifty percent of the school children speak a mother tongue other than English. In these boards the ethnic mix includes, in addition to those mentioned above, people of

Caribbean and European backgrounds.

The primary grade teachers in these boards are predominantly female, caucasian and middle class. All speak English and their mean age is about thirty-five. Virtually all hold B.A. or B.Sc. degrees and all hold elementary school teaaching certificates. The total number of teachers to be served in this practicum project could be as many as two hundred or so.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The author is a faculty member in the early childhood education department of a large faculty of education in a major university. She has worked in this setting for twenty years, in a variety of roles, as nursery school and kindergarten teacher, preschool supervisor, and practice teaching supervisor, all the while teaching many courses to the approximately one hundred students enrolled annually in the teacher education program. Author of a widely used video series about children's play, she has also produced curriculum materials in thinking skills and problem solving for elementary school children. She holds an elementary school teacher's certificate, an early childhood education diploma, and a Master of Education degree. Her present responsibilities include the teaching of four courses and supervision of three quarters of the department's students in practice teaching assignments.

In the role of educational consultant she has travelled

throughout the province for most of her professional life, providing in-service to teachers, especially in the area of child development and observation skills, under the auspices of, variously, the Ministry of Education, the faculty of education, individual school boards or the provincial association for early childhood education.

CHAPTER II

Study of the Problem

Problem Description

In this province, as in North America generally, the educational community is being pressured by two apparently contradictory influences - on the one hand, the back-to-basics and accountability movement, and on the other, the active learning and developmentally appropriate practece movement. While the public, popular press and education critics make frequent and often strident demands for a return to traditional, structured, teacher-directed schooling, emphasizing the acquisition of academic skills and supported by standardized testing to ensure quality control, child development specialists and ECE professional organizations exhort teachers to ensure that programs for young children are child centered, individualized, relaxed and playful, with an emphasis on free exploration and active discovery learning, and with observation as the chief mode of assessing progress. The classroom has become a battleground of conflicting paradigms, with the teacher caught in the crossfire.

Over the years, teachers with whom the author has worked

have often said that while they intuitively support a play-oriented approach to education for children up to age eight or so, they have difficulty justifying this approach, and feeling confident about it, for several reasons. One is a lack of knowledge about the significance of particular play behaviors, especially as they may relate to such highly valued academic subjects as reading, writing and mathematics. Another is inadequate preparation, either in their preservice training or in professional development, in precisely what to look for when observing children engaged in play, as well as in how to observe, record and then report their findings to others.

Moreover they express uncertainty about what they as teachers can do to enhance children's play - "where to go with it" - and admit to feeling sometimes more like babysitters than "real" teachers, as they perceive their role to be sometimes one of mere supervision rather than instruction. Like many of the public, they themselves implicitly equate "teaching" with giving formal instruction. Many also are at a loss for ways to convey the significance of play to parents and others in a credible and convincing manner. Global statements about the goodness of play for children simply don't do the job, yet teachers find that they have little else to offer.

In brief, the problem is that teachers experience considerable pressure to be accountable for children's learning in the play oriented program, but lack the knowledge base, observation skills, intervention strategies and communication techniques to do so effectively.

Causative Analysis

While the causes of the pressure on teachers to be accountable and to go "back to basics" can in part be traced to larger societal issues such as North America's anxiety about economic competition with Japan, the causes of the teachers' difficlties in observing, assessing and enhancing play in the classroom, and in justifying a learning-through-play approach appear to lie chiefly in the lack of opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skill necessary.

To begin with, an examination of college calendars reveals that most of the preservice teacher education programs available in this province give little or no training in methods of assessment of student performance other than various types of testing, and that usually such as exists is in the context of curriculum (as, for example, in a course in the diagnosis and remediation of learning difficulties in mathematics), or of special education. In many cases, these courses are only options; hence students may complete their preservice program without having any course in observing and assessing children's behavior. While for many years the author's own department has offered a required course explicitly focussed on methods of assessment, especially day-to-day systematic observation of emergent behavior in addition to testing, this department graduates only about forty of the approximately two to three thousand new elementary school teachers produced annually by this province's ten colleges of education. It is evident then that

only a small percentage of teachers have had adequate training in observation.

With regard to the understanding of play behavior, the situation is even worse. No courses about play are offered in any college of education in the province. In the author's own institution, only a few weeks are devoted to play within the observation course.

Given the inadequacy of preparation for observing children's behavior and for comprehending and dealing with play in pre-service teacher education, one must look to inservice programs for possible remedies. Unfortunately, most inservice for teachers is woefully inadequate, consisting usually of "one shot quickies", in which an "expert" swoops down for an after-school, evening, or at best, half day session, tosses a few ideas at a roomful of tired and (often) sceptical practitioners, and promptly disappears, leaving the teachers with, as it were, educational heartburn - a lump of undigested information which most will be unable to incorporate into their thinking and practice. This aspect of the problem is particularly acute in those school boards which are at a distance from colleges and universities. The common approach to inservice does not allow for the time that it takes to make a novel idea one's own, nor does it bring the practitioners and the "expert" together on repeated occasions during which ideas can be explored, questioned and reflected upon, then put into practice, with the opportunity for coaching and feedback. The lack of practice with feedback is critical; teachers are usually exhorted to put new ideas

into practice, but are not supported with coaching and feedback while doing so. It is not surprising then that novel ideas are soon abandoned, and that inservice is looked upon by many teachers as irrelevant and useless.

One might argue that, inasmuch as there is a growing literature for professionals on the nature, contribution and value of play, teachers have ready access to the information they need in order to be effective in running and justifying a play based program. Unfortunately, it is a fact of life that most teachers, for a variety of reasons, do not keep up with the literature to the extent desirable. That the information on play is perforce scattered throughout many journals and books makes it difficult for a busy teacher to keep up, even if he or she does conscienteously attempt to search out the information. Furthermore, teachers lack conceptual organizers into which to fit the bits of infomation they do come across - overall frameworks which would allow them to make sense of the information and its implications for classroom practice and observation. The mere fact that there is now more information about play does not in itself solve the problem.

The above factors are probably the main causes of the problem to which this practicum is addressed. However, there is another, underlying factor which pervades the entire issue of play, and that is the problem of the word "play" itself. "Play" has a poor reputation. Many people, public and educators alike, either consciously or subconsciously regard "play" as a four letter word. It smacks of the trivial, the

frivolous, the childish. Much as the protestant work ethic has itself been severly shaken in the past few decades, it still has a powerful influence on North American thought; work is good, play is bad. Hence while parents may grudgingly accept that their children play in Kindergarten, most still are convinced that play is inadmissable beyond the door of grade one. Even during the Kindergarten year, parents put pressure on teachers to reduce the "playtime" and get the children into "real learning" - formal instruction in reading, writing and mathematics. And many teachers succumb, because their thinking too is influenced by the same ethic.

The present problem, then, has both philosophical as well as practical roots, all of which will have to be addressed in a solution process.

CHAPTER II

Study of the Problem

Problem Description

In this province, as in North America generally, the educational community is being pressured by two apparently contradictory influences - on the one hand, the back-to-basics and accountability movement, and on the other, the active learning and developmentally appropriate practece movement. While the public, popular press and education critics make frequent and often strident demands for a return to traditional, structured, teacher-directed schooling, emphasizing the acquisition of academic skills and supported by standardized testing to ensure quality control, child development specialists and ECE professional organizations exhort teachers to ensure that programs for young children are child centered, individualized, relaxed and playful, with an emphasis on free exploration and active discovery learning, and with observation as the chief mode of assessing progress. The classroom has become a battleground of conflicting paradigms, with the teacher caught in the crossfire.

Over the years, teachers with whom the author has worked

Problem Documentation

Data supporting the existence of this problem were obtained through distribution of a short questionaire, with four point Likert-type scales, spaces for written comments, and a brief needs assessment regarding aspects of play about which teachers might like more information, to primary teachers in three boards of education. (See Appendix A.)

In board "A", a large, relatively sparsely populated rural area, 67 questionaires were sent out and 30 were returned, for a response rate of 43%. Teachers expressed unequivocally that they felt a need to acquire further information about play and greater skill in observing, assessing, reporting, and justifying play activity. (See Table 1.) Written comments included such remarks as: "Parents are confused...It would be nice to be able to discuss [play] properly"; "I welcome methods of play observation"; "Better ways to communicate would be helpful"; "I do feel strongly [about play], but it's hard to educate other teachers beyond the primary level!"

Table 1

Responses to Choices in Questionaire Items 1,2,3,4 - Board A

	Str'ly agree	Agree	Disagree	Str'ly disagree
Item				
1. Help	15	14	0	0
2. Need info	10	16	2	1
3. Observe	14	15	0	1
4. Report	12	16	0	1

(There was a total of 3 non-responses to items.)

In board "B", a mixture of large towns and farming communities, 165 questionaires were distributed and 97 were returned, for a response rate of 59%. Here again, the responses indicated very strongly that teachers feel the need for support with their play-based programs. (See Table 2.) Most comments revealed that the teachers feel a personal commitment to play, but have difficulty in assessing and explaining it; "I find this the most difficult area to justify, yet instinctively I know it is the most important."; To support a programme, parents must understand it", "I need hard data based upon research...", "Documentation is crucial to credibility". An administrator wrote, "There is a need ... for schools and teachers to do a public relations program for parents. Inservice will help build the confidence of teachers to do this." Even in the case of those few teachers who checked off "disagree"" to some of the statements, their

comments made it evident that they were committed to play; "I feel confident that play is an important part of learning. I know many others who are not as comfortable."

Table 2

Responses to Choices in Questionaire Items 1,2,3,4 - Board B

	Str'ly agree	Agree	Disagree	Str'ly disagree
Item				
1. Help	63	29	1	3
2. Need info	22	62	8	0
3. Observe	43	46	1	1
4. Report	33	54	3	1

(There was a total of 17 non-responses to items.)

In board "C", an area with several small cities, 245 surveys were sent out and 130 returned, for a response rate of 53%. Again, the results support the perception of play as difficult for teachers to explain and report, although more of these teachers expressed a sense of having adequate knowledge about play than in the other two boards. (See Table 3.) Remarks included: "More information is always welcome. I recognize [play's] value. Junior teachers need more convincing"; "As educators it is important for us to thoroughly understand how young children develop and learn

about their world. This kind of background must be a prerequisite for all primary and junior teachers"; "Parents and others are still unsure of the value in 'play'-active learning because of their lack of experience." That some teachers had specific questions - "Should I be looking for specific skills in the academic field or is it just social skills or both?" and "What kinds of activities are accepted for learning?" - indicates that there is considerable felt need for support in this board.

Table 3

Responses to Choices in Questionaire Items 1,2,3,4 - Board C

Item	Str'ly agree	Agree	Disagree	Str'ly disagree
1. Help	83	42	2	0
2. Need info	23	68	28	6
3. Observe	46	62	18	3
4. Report	40	60	24	3

(There was a total of 12 non-responses to items.)

These data from the three different boards support the existence of the problem as a fairly widespread one, and indicate that teachers desire more information about play and greater skill in responding to public demands for accountability in the play-based program.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

As the problem involves the interplay of three major issues - that of "play" in the school curriculum, of the assessment of children's learning, and of inservice education for teachers - literature pertaining to all three will be reviewed.

I. "Play"

Definition of the term "play" is itself a problem on at least two levels.

As attested to by researchers in the field, "play" is notoriously difficult to define (Smith, Takhvar, Gore & Vollstedt, 1985). For over one hundred years, attempts have been made by philosophers, educators, psychologists, and even the poet Schiller, to capture "play" in words, with the result that we have at least a dozen so-called "classical" definitions and close to that number of more modern, "dynamic" theories of play (Rubin, Fein & Vandenberg, 1983). Our first concern is the definition of play for the purposes of this project, and at this level the problem is relatively easy to lay to rest, by choosing the definition offered by Rubin, Fein and Vandenberg (1983). The characteristics which distinguish "play" from "non-play" are that: 1) it is intrinsically motivated; 2) attention is given to means more than to ends; 3) it is different from exploratory behaviour; 4) it is characterized by non-literality, or pretense; 5) it is free from externally applied rules; 6) the participant(s)

is (are) physically active. To these characteristics may be added non-redundant points from Garvey's (1977) list of play signifiers; it is pleasurable, and it is systematically related to non-play activities (in Donmoyer, 1981). Since this project concerns itself with play in the school setting, it must be noted that the terms " active learning", "inquiry approach" and "activity based program " are often used by educators to refer to school experiences which have the elements of play, and that these terms will appear in this proposal, along with "play".

The second level at which the definition of play presents a problem is the more critical; that is, the level at which the definition leaves the relatively calm realm of denotation and enters the fractious arena of connotation. What does "play" mean to educators and to the public - to teachers, administrators, parents, school trustees, media education critics, and, for that matter, to children? On this level, there is much conflict, because the various parties to the issue perceive the reality of teaching and learning in fundamentally different ways (Donmoyer, 1981), "which develop from the thoughts, interests and energy (physical and fiscal) of society" (Glickman, 1981, p. 2). Teachers who are unaware of this hard political fact will flounder when attempting to run and justify a play-based classroom program if those to whom they are accountable espouse an engineering (Donmoyer, 1981), or industrial (Glickman, 1981), model of education, a Lockeian perspective in which children are seen as raw material to be shaped and processed by a technician-teacher

into products suitable for the various demands of the economy. In this perspective, which Donmoyer points out is "so pervasive as to be virtually invisible" (1981, p. 115), there is a rigid, antithetical distinction between work and play, and play has no place in the school setting except for recess. Many teachers, on the other hand, adhere to what may be an equally invisible and unexamined assumption on their part, the "agricultural" model of learning, whose history Glickman (1981) traces back through Piaget, Dewey, Kant , Leibnitz and Rousseau, in which the child is seen as a growing entity whose mind is a dynamic constructor of knowledge, and in which the teacher is seen as cultivating and facilitating, not dominating, the growth process. Play as a medium for learning is very compatible with this viewpoint.

However, the current climate of thought in North America has swung noticeably towards the industrial mindset, very likely in response to anxiety over economic competition with the Far East and the European Economic Community. Sylva 1984) expresses concern about the tendency of early childhood educators to respond to criticisms by the "industrialists" by resorting to vague, romantic and unverifiable generalizations about play. Instead, she says, educators must present substantial evidence of play's benefits derived form empirical research and systematic observation.
Monighan-Nourot and her associates concur; "Protecting the child's right to play is no easy job. It goes far beyond setting up an environment where children can play... It means knowing what goes on when children play" (1986, p. 9).

Further complicating this issue of definition is that there is not a simple dichotomy between teachers and the public, as though the teacher group were a monolithic entity and it were just a mattter of educating the public. Rothlein and Brett (1987) found that whereas many teachers pay lip service to play as valuable "children's work", only twenty percent of the teachers they surveyed actually included play as an intergral part of the curriculum. Forty-four percent allotted a certain period of time (one half hour or less) to play, "only when work is finished." Teachers cited parental criticism and interference, and rigid schedules and curriculum demands as reasons not to include play or expand its place in the school day. It appeared to the authors that teachers were intimidated, uninterested or antipathetic to play, in spite of evidence that it is constructive, and in contradiction to the teachers own claims.

It is clear that a large aspect of the present problem is the need to rehabilitate the term "play" in the eyes of educators and the public alike, in a manner which takes into account the pervasiveness of the industrial model of learning and the anxiety which underlies it.

II. Assessment of Children's Learning

In this area, there are two main aspects to the problem. One is that , because of the press for accountability, young children's learning is being assessed by methods which are inappropriate and deleterious in the opinion of early childhood educators. The second is that teachers find it difficult to assess and report the content and outcomes of play in the classroom because they don't know what to look for.

While testing for progress in learning has a long history, the use of standardized tests mushroomed exponentially after 1965, when in the United States, greatly increased federal funding for educational programs came with strings attached - demands for the evaluation of results (Perrone, 1989). Pencil and paper group tests were seen as an inexpensive and easy way to meet these requirements (not to mention lucrative for the publishers of such tests). With increasing anxiety over the poor performance of North American students in comparison to those of other countries on international measures of achievement in mathematics and science, and the uproar over falling SAT scores, the testing movement, with its seductive implicit promise of "higher standards", has burgeoned still more. In many areas, even kindergarten children are subjected to paper and pencil tests for the purpose of placement (National Association of State Boards of Education, 1988), and pressure is subtly or not so subtly placed on teachers to "teach to the test",

drilling their pupils on the items which appear on the tests, so as to raise school districts' scores. Critics of these practices point out that such tests are invalid for many reasons which should be well known by educators at least, such as that, the younger the child, the less stability in results of any kind of testing. "It is in these early years that children's growth is so uneven, so idiosyncratic, that large numbers of skills needed for success in school are in such fluid acquisitional stages" (Perrone, 1989, p.3).

However, according to early childhood educators, more is at stake than the validity of results; the very practice of testing subverts the educational process in ways which undermine the child's genuine learning, self-confidence, and development of the dispositions and values, such as moral autonomy, creativity and personal initiative, necessary for citizenship in a democratic society (Kamii, 1989). Standardized tests do not tap creativity, decision-making, problem-solving, curiosity, persistence and other traits which may be more significant than any particular "fragments of [skill] they can do intellectually" (Morgan-Worsham, 1989).

In the course of these criticisms, educators often exhort teachers to observe and study children's play behavior as an alternative and more suitable assessment method (Morgan-Worsham, 1989). Unfortunately, there is little material readily available for teachers to use in doing so. What exists is either scattered through any number of publications, or is too vague to be of much value. While

assessing play behavior may indeed partially solve the problem of inappropriate testing, work must first be done to make available to teachers coherent, specific and substantiated information and guidelines on what to look for in play, and how to understand the meaning of what is observed.

III. Inservice for Teachers

It follows from the discussion in the previous sections that teachers should have opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skill they need in order to mount, assess and justify accountable, yet developmentally appropriate play-based programs. There is now quite a respectable body of literature on play and its benefits, but unfortunately, for a variety of reasons - lack of time and energy among them - teachers do not read professional journals (Greer, 1979). Mohammed must therefore go to the mountain, in the form of inservice. However, this will not in itself solve the problem, inasmuch as inservice can vary immensely in quality, too often being no more than a "costly spectator sport" (Flanders, in Shepardson, 1984, p.63), superficial and wasteful of time and money. Fullan (1979) reviewed the negative findings on inservice: 1) "one-shot" sessions are widespread and ineffective; 2) topics are chosen by persons other than the recipients ; 3) follow-up and support are rare; 4) individual needs of teachers are rarely addressed; 5) follow-up evaluation is rare; 6) there is a lack of structural support for the changes promoted in the inservice. Shepardson's (1984) analysis revealed similar flaws, with the cost to the teachers of anxiety, failure to implement changes, cynicism and resistance to further inservice. In a study of the effectiveness of programmatic (that is , on-going, coherent and integrated) inservice as compared to that of one-shot sessions, the former was found to be ninety-four percent effective in promoting significant

positive change, whereas the latter was only sixty-eight percent effective (Florida Educational Research and Development Program, 1974, in Shepardson, 1984). While "canned" single sessions delivered by an outside expert are acceptable for arousing interest and awareness, and bringing recipients up-to-date information, they are not effective for skill development or in-depth learning (Joyce, 1979; Shepardson, 1984). Such sessions tend to be lectures, with little or no opportunity for reflective questioning and certainly none for coached practice in implementation (Fullan, 1979), or they are razzle-dazzle workshops lacking in conceptual underpinnings to link up to previous knowledge and to support the novel ideas (Shepardson, 194). Teachers typically complain that they are given little or no input to the planning of sessions, that the inservice does not address their needs, and that staff development activities do not help them become better teachers (Amos & Benton, 1988).

It is evident, then, that in addressing the present problem, careful attention must be given to the issue of inservice.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The following goals were projected for this practicum. At the end of the implementation period, the teachers involved would display greater competence in observing play behavior of young children, assessing the learning and/or developmental progress revealed therein, and reporting on these findings to parents and others in a confident and credible manner - in short, in being accountable within a developmentally appropriate program. They would express greater confidence in their knowledge about play and their ability to explain and justify it to those who may question or criticize a play-oriented program. In addition, they would indicate satisfaction with the learning activities they participated in, that is, the inservice activities offered by the author in the practicum solution strategy.

Behavioral Objectives

1. Quantitative Data

At the end of the implementation period, and when surveyed by means of a questionaire using a four point Likert-type scale, teachers would express increased confidence in thier knowledge and skill in observing, assessing and reporting play behavior, and satisfaction with

the inservice experience, by checking off "strongly agree" or "agree" in response to statements such as, " I feel I have gained a useful knowledge base about play and how it contributes to school learning", "I feel I can report specific information to parents about their child's progress in play", and " The inservice learning activities met my needs for knowledge and skill development as a teacher." (See Appendix B.) A two to one majority of positive responses ("strongly agree" or "agree") over negative responses ("disagree" or "strongly disagree") would be considered evidence that the implementation of the solution strategy was a success.

It must be noted at this point that specific learning objectives, whose achievement will contribute to the achievement of the overall objectives mentioned above, would be incorporated in each session within the framework of the selected solution strategy. See the discussion of the solution strategy.

2. Qualitative Data

At the end of the implementation period, and when surveyed by means of a questionaire which includes space for written comments, teachers would write comments reflecting greater confidence in their knowledge about play, ability to observe, assess and report play behavior, and ability to communicate with parents and others about it, and reflecting satisfaction with the way in which the inservice was

offered.

Instrumentation

A printed questionaire (see Appendix B) would be distributed to teachers who participated in the activities planned in the solution strategy. It would contain five statements, each having a four point Likert-type scale to check off (from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree"). A space for written comments would be avaailable after each statement. There would be no requirement for name, signature or any identifying data. Teacher might be requested to fill out the questionaire on site after the final activity in the solution strategy, or the questionaires might be distributed to participants through the various board of education courier systems, with a two week deadline for responses.

Responses to each item on the questionaire would be tallied to determine the frequency of each of the four possible choices in the scale. A two-thirds majority of positive responses ("strongly agree" and "agree") would be considered evidence that the solution strategy was successful. The written comments would also be examined; it was anticipated that if the strategy was effective, the majority of these would be of a positive nature, reflecting confidence in the knowledge and skills acquired in the courst of the activities, as well as satisfaction with the activities themselves as learning experiences.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

"Programs that emphasize play in the curriculum place a heavy burden on the teacher. The teacher needs to understand principles of child development as they apply to play. The teacher must be knowledgeable, keenly observant, intuitive, insightful and sensitive." (Monighan-Nourot, Scales & Van Hoorne, 1987, p. 5).

As with the literature pertaining to the problem, material bearing on the solution will be dealt with under the three relevant headings - play, observation and assessment, and inservice for teachers.

I. "Play".

The main problem with play has always been its "bum rep". Fortunately, current literature in child development is replete with information, derived from research, indicating that play is indeed a valuable contributor to virtually all aspects of children's growth, including school learning. This material, reviewed here, was integrated into the solution strategy planned by the author, partly so that teachers would be better informed themselves, but also to prepare them with counter-arguments to the criticism so frequently levelled against play (Dorsey, 1989).

Glickman (1981) offers a history of the place of play in the school curriculum. It is very valuable for teachers

to be aware of this particular aspect of the history of ideas, and how the ideology of curriculum is influenced by political, sociological and economic conditions. For example, post-World War One and 1970's prosperity provided fertile ground for curriculum experimentation focussed on the individual child as creator, explorer, inquirer and constructor of knowledge, an ethos very congenial to play. In contrast, the Cold War of the 50's, the Space Race, and the Japanese economic threat of the 80's each brought a conservative reaction, and return to a competitive, direct-instruction, child-as-product approach to curriculum which was very hostile to play.

There is a strong anti-play current flowing today, although, as always, situations are never either black or white, and play in its emphasis on creativity and problem solving, finds some favour even in the business community (Time, June 11, 1990). The willingness of the play-oriented teacher to give more control to children - children define even work as "play" if self-chosen (King, 1979, in Smith et al., 1985) - facilitates cognitive growth by permitting them to explore and interact with their environment (Jennings & Connors, 1983; Sutton-Smith & Kelley-Byrne, 1984; Vandenberg, 1980). According to Tipps (1981), "...play has the potential to maintain levels of arousal and sensory processing which engage the brain fully" (p. 21). Positive affect and mastery are associated with "self-selected and pursued activities "(p. 22) - ie. play. Canalization, "the process which controls the influence of genetic or environmental forces on

the development of individuals and species, [allowing them to] acquire those skills that are most essential to the species" (p. 26) is enhanced by play. "Play maximizes the opportunity for the mastery of skills, representational complexity and social interaction which enables homo sapiens to adapt in a changing world" (p. 26).

Definitions of play are important for teachers. Smith and Vollstedt (in Smith at al. , 1985) found that the most effective criteria for distinguishing play from non-play were non-literality, positive affect and flexibility. They note that there is no one comprehensive definition of play but that the more criteria present, the more certain it is that an observer will label an activity "play".

Stages in and types of play are also valuable for teachers to know. Piaget's categories (1951, in Smith et al., 1985) - practice play, symbolic play, and games with rules - are associated with the sensori-motor, pre-operational and concrete operational periods respectively. Smilansky (1968, in Smith et al., 1985) posits four stages which are often taken as normative and developmental (Rubin & Krasnor, 1980, in Smith et al., 1985) - functional, constructive, dramatic, and games with rules.

A five point continuum for play and learning has been developed by Neumann (Bergen, 1988), according to the degree of control children have over the content of activity. Where control is "high-internal", discovery learning can take place through play; further along the continuum towards high

external control is reception learning mediated through "directed play". Where control rests entirely with the teacher, learning is through drill/repetitive practice in "work". Being aware of this continuum, and the pros and cons of learning activity on any point on it, allows the teacher to make thoughtful choices about suitable modes for learning and to justify these to critics.

So much has been written on the benefits of play to all aspects of children's development that only a summary can be presented here. However, the author planned to present detailed information in a variety of ways as part of the solution strategy.

Athey (1984, 1988) reviews the interrelationship between play and development in the realms of cognitive, language and moral growth, with the caution that while play reflects development, it cannot be definitively said to cause development, nor to be a necessary or sufficient condition for development. Concept development is achieved through the mental processes of categorization, generalization, concept acquisition and class inclusion, according to Athey. Play, by bringing children into contact with a wide range of stimuli, allows them to induce subjective, and later more objective, categories from within, to generalize to new situations, especially in the stage of concrete operations, to generate and test hypotheses in the realms of physical and social knowledge , and to grasp the notion of sets and subsets. With

regard to creativity, she notes that Torrance's (1966) tests of that construct included many tasks found in the spontaneous play of children. Play encourages flexibility in problem solving, as well as, because of the positive affect felt by the child, a disposition to persist in trying to find solutions. Just as important as problem solving is problem finding, another capability enhanced by play.

Language development is closely intertwined with play; play enlarges the range of subjects to talk about and provides companions to talk to. Pretense, or dramatic, play is especially rich in its contribution, in that children begin to grasp that different kinds of language can be used for different purposes. Language itself becomes a play thing, the jokes, riddles and puns so popular in middle childhood.

The constant interaction with others that play involves also fosters moral growth. Children must learn the social rules that enable groups to function effectively, and play activity can be said to be a microcosm of larger moral issues. Curry and Bergen (1988) offer an exhaustive review of the contribution of play to social, emotional and gender role development. Play helps the child define self, discover what her relationships with others will be, whether as follower, leader, collaborator, friend, rival and so on. In play, too, is expressed the full range of emotions that go with being human, and it is believed that play has a therapeutic benefit, in that potentially overwhelming feelings, such as anger, jealousy, fear, hostility, dependence and hatred may be safely explored in this context. Play reflects gender

development, and Curry and Bergen summarize the variety of theories on how sex roles are acquired - psychoanalytic, social learning, ethological, cognitive developmental, feminist and family system. Because the school is an influential context for sex role development, teachers should be aware of these frameworks and how different play experiences affect children's concepts of self as girl or boy.

The bulk of the literature on the benefits of play has to do with pretense play, and so it was considered essential to convey this information to teachers, especially in that, because of its space requirements, potential for noise and mess, and its striking dissimilarity to what most people think of as "school", it is usually the first aspect of play to be eliminated from the classroom. Smilansky and Shefatya (1990) present a useful summary of correlational and experimental studies of pretense play as it relates to school behavior and achievement. In seven correlational studies, positive relationships were found between pretense play and such factors as sociometric status, classification abilities, perspective taking, divergent thinking, persistence, and reading comprehension. In the experimental studies of adult intervention in make-believe play, positive effects were found for quantity and quality of language use, richness of vocabulary, curiosity, original behavior, and quantity and quality of social interaction with peers.

Pellegrini (1980) found that Kindergarten children who

frequently engaged in dramatic play scored higher on the Metropolitan Readiness Test than those who spent more time in functional play (according to Smilansky's categories, a primitive form of play characterized by simple manipulation of playthings). Similar findings are cited by Yawkey (1981), who in his own study found that children in a sociodramatic play condition scored higher on math readiness than did children in a cut and paste condition. That higher levels of cognitive skill are involved in pretense play is supported by Rubin (1980), who lists the following mental abilities as concomitants of such play; one-to-one correspondence, conservation, comprehension of transformation and identity, decentration, reversability, seriation, classification, and perspective-taking. For example, conservation is seen in the child's ability to "conserve the imaginary identities of play objects despite contraindicative stimuli" (p. 78) - a spoon cannot be dialed, yet is used as a telephone throughout a play episode.

Several authors have linked pretense play to competence in language and reading. In her review, Eden (198) cites the findings of Corsaro (1981), Pellegrini and Galda (1982) and Saltz, Dixon and Johnson (1977), all of whose studies found a positive correlation between frequency of dramatic play and later literacy. Williamson and Silvern (1984) found that adult guidance of dramatic play enhanced children's comprehension of stories; and in a similar study Silvern, Taylor, Williamson, Surbeck & Kelley (1986) found that children who were given the opportunity to act out unfamiliar

stories not only recalled those stories better than controls, but also were later able to recall new stories even when not given the chance to act them out; "...the thematic-fantasy experience would seem to provide children with information about stories in general (metalinguistic knowledge) rather than just the reconstruction of story facts..." (p. 84). That dramatic play has many of the elements of narrative - characters, "plot", setting, dialogue - may explain its link with literacy. It is also linked with associative fluency and divergent problem solving skills (Dansky, 1980) and to the capacity of children to generate alternative solutions in interpersonal conflicts (McCarty, 1977).

Problem solving ability is also associated with constructive play (Cheyne & Rubin, 1983; Johnson, Ershler & Lawton, 1982). Vandenberg hypothesizes that play with various items may help the child acquire "a generalized cognitive template of how the item might be used", (p. 60), so that when she is faced by a problem, she has developed both the skills to use the item and the possible ways in which it could be used.

The above review represents a sampling of what the author decided to offer to teachers in the solution strategy, to provide them with awareness and confidence about the place of play in the curriculum.

II. Assessment of Children's Learning

That play can be a window into a child's mind is a Piagetian notion taken up by Rubin, Fein and Vandenberg in their extensive review of the topic (1983). They note that play has long been used to assess aspects of personality and cognitive growth, that it is "an important alternative to formal testing", but that up until recently, it lacked "psychometric respectability" (p. 756). However, the literature can now boast of a number of models for observing play, and although most originated for experimental purposes, the author regarded them as adaptable for teacher use.

One of the oldest models is Parten's conceptualization of social play stages - so old, in fact, that its categories have become common parlance, like "kleenex" or "xerox". More recently, they have been combined with the Smilansky play types by Rubin (Rubin, Fein & Vandenberg, 1983), and the resulting categories (for example, solitary-pretense, parallel-constructive, etc.) have been found to be stable for individual children over time and across situations, and hence valuable for observation purposes.

Another useful combination of categories is offered by Pellegrini (1984)'; in this scheme, Parten's stages, somewhat simplified, are combined with those of Piaget in a cross-classification chart which can be used as a device to

record the type of play engaged in by a child, such as solitary-functional or group-dramatic. Because there is an assumption tht maturation is reflected in the change from functional play through to games-with-rules, and from solitary to group play, this observation system can presumably be used to keep track of a child's progress through the year, allowing for certain inferences about his or her cognitive and social development. Very similar is the model developed by Sponseller and colleagues, using the Parten and Piaget stages (Bergen, 1988). Like the other, it could be used diagnostically, but, as Bergen cautions, the apparent level of play can be affected by the setting and materials available, so that sweeping inferences about the child should not be made.

Considerable research interest has been focussed on dramatic, or pretense, play, and so the literature features quite a few observation systems for this particular form of activity.

Nicholich (1977) developed an observation-based schema for pretense play in children who are of toddler age. While this might lack applicability for most schoolteachers, it might be valuable for those dealing with developmentally delayed youngsters. Similar to the above are the developmental signposts in dramatic play offered by Fenson and Schell (1986), which focus on the child's increasing capacity over the toddler period to combine more and more interrelated "schemes" (for example, one scheme is putting a doll in a bed, another is covering it with a blanket, and so

on), and to combine language with, or substitute it for, action. Another such observation scheme that could be kept "on tap" for teachers of special needs children is that of McConkey and Jefferee (1980), which was designed for those children in particular. The teacher keeps a frequency check list of a child's play behaviors, ranging from "exploratory" through to " sequence [in pretend play]", enabling the teacher to note the ratio of more primitive to more advanced behaviors, and hence to note progress or regression.

More directly relevant for elementary teachers are the categories of pretense play offered by Johnson and Ershler (1980), as their work suggests a correlation between these categories and a child's cognitive abilities; for example, "situational transformations without props" are considered to be more advanced than "transformations using props". Roskos' (1988b) taxonomy of pretense play is particularly interesting because it is related to the development of literacy. Progress through the five hierarchically related stages reveals more and more story-like qualities in the play, along with less and less reliance on props and more on language to convey meaning and story lines - " the emancipation of narrative from action" (Vygotsky, in Roskos, 1988b, p. 21). Teachers could use the taxonomy as a set of benchmarks for diagnosis and, possibly, planning of activites to enhance dramatic play, especially since its relationship to the all-important reading and writing is so persuasive.

In another article (1988a), Roskos presents a list of questions for observers of dramatic play to ask ("Is there a topic?", "Are there roles? Are these announced, assigned or assumed?"), and an observation scheme for the stages children go through in constructing a dramatic play episode - readying, direction, and acting. Smith (1987) offers a checklist of behaviors associated with dramatic play. They appear both to be hierarchically related, to a certain extent, and to reflect maturation; a teacher could use them for diagnosis and planning . Christie (1982) developed a socio-dramatic plaly inventory, to be used as a checklist, as well as a set of criteria by which the quality fo children's pretense play may be evaluated.

Probably the best known name in the field of pretense play study is Smilansky. In her latest work (1990), she offers a very detailed scale for evaluating dramatic and socio-dramatic play. It has high inter-rater reliability, test-retest reliability, and cross-situational consistency. A small study showed predictive validity regarding school achievement. Specifically tailored to three to eight year old children, this scale is of obvious value to primary grade teachers, and hence was incorporated into the author's solution strategy.

One of the reasons why so much attention has been paid to pretense play is its link with language development. Two references offer useful frameworks for observing language in

this context. Doyle and Connolly (1987) draw attention to the distinction between the language of enactment (talking in role) and the language of management (negotiating about the play activity). The latter includes assignment of roles, description of one's own action, directives to other children, and statements about activities. Since enactment and management skills correlate with peer popularity (Doyle & Connolly, 1987), teachers might profitably be tuned in to the the quality and content of such language behavior. Schwartzman (in Sutton-Smith, 1980) lists six types of utterance made in dramatic play negotiation, such as formation statements ("Let's play house"), counter definition ("I'm not the baby"), and maintainance ("I meant to do that"). Here again, these categories are revealing of a child's cognitive and social skill, and worth teachers' attention. A typology of what could be termed "meta-roles" in dramatic play is postulated by Ishee and Goldhaber (1990). Children take on one or more meta-roles as play proceeds, and since there is some indication, although not yet supported by systematic analysis, that there is a maturational continuum involved, it is useful for teachers to be able to identify which children, for instance , were "mimes" last month but have now progressed to being "actor/authors".

Less work has been done on observation schemes for other types of play, such as constructive play (block building, etc.). However, the literature does

offer a few interesting possibilities.

Although not backed up as yet by experimental evidence, there is a conceptualization by Shotwell, Wolf and Gardner (1979) of two styles of symbol use in play, which could be revealing for teachers planning for children and reporting to their parents. In this conceptualization, some individuals are "dramatists" and others are "patterners". Dramatists are interested in relationships and emotional responses; presented with blocks, they would assign characters to them (three different sized blocks might become the Three Bears) and play out a drama. Patterners are intrigued by configurations and the workings of things; with the same blocks, they might attempt to solve engineering problems or arrange them so as to clarify the size and shape relationships among them. The author will introduce this concept as a potential interpretive lens through which teachers might view the block play of their pupils.

An observation system which covers constructive play as well as dramatic play is that of Popp (1980). Here, play behaviors and utterances can be analysed in terms of how they reveal the basic thinking skills (observation, classification, correspondence and seriation) the child is applying in play. For example, if a child constructs a symmetrical building, the application of the mental skill of correspondence is revealed. When a child, in negotiating dramatic play, says, "First we'll go to the store, then we'll cook the lunch and then have a nap," seriation is revealed. Since the basic thinking skills are fundamental to academic

skills (Popp, 1979), analysis of play in these terms would be diagnostically and programatically valuable for teachers.

In summary, it is evident that the literature is rich with systems of play observation which can provide credible alternatives to formal testing and permit the teacher to be accountable in the play oriented program. As part of the solution strategy, the author will plan experiences to not only inform teachers of these systems but also permit them to gain practice in their use. This consideration leads us to the topic of inservice.

III. Inservice for Teachers

The literature on inservice education for teachers is quite clear-cut and unanimous on how to make such experiences effective.

In general, inservice should be "programatic"; that is, intensive, ongoing over a fairly lengthy period of time (weeks, months, even years), arising out of teachers' real concerns about problems experienced in the course of their professional activity, and linked to a general effort of the school with the support of administrators (Dept. of HEW, 1980; Fullan, 1979; Greer, 1979; Jong-hee, 1984; Shepardson, 1984). In this regard, the author believed that the development of a <u>series</u> of inservice experiences rather than a single presentation about play was not only feasible but actually necessary, in view of the sheer quantity of information involved. With regard to relevance, the needs assessment already carried out established that teachers were indeed concerned about play.

Teachers themselves should be involved in the planning of inservice; establishment of goals, choice of activities, timing and so on (Dept. of HEW, 1980; Fullan, 1979; Greer, 1979; Purinton, 1983; Shepardson, 1984), rather than having the goals and experiences chosen solely by others. They must feel that their professional needs are at the heart of the enterprise (Egan, 1986; Greer, 1979; Shepardson, 1984). The author decided to build into the first session of the inservice a mechanism for individual teachers to suggest

topics and areas of concern which she could arrange to address in subsequent sessions.

Participation is more enthusiastic and effects of inservice are more long-lasting if involvement is voluntary rather than required (Griffin, 1983; Purinton, 1983). In her planning, the author decided to suggest to consultants and administrators that teachers be invited, not required, to participate.

Inservice experiences, while flexible enough in conception to respond to individual needs and to emergent issues (Jong-hee, 1984), should nonetheless be carefully planned so as to have objectives which are readily apparent and meaningful to the participants (Greer, 1979; Fullan, 1979; Orlich, 1989). In developing the inservice, the author decided to formulate a set of objectives based on the needs assessment and her research, and then when the sessions were under way, to formulate additional ones based on the expressed needs of the participants.

Other factors contributing to effectiveness include convenient location and timing of sessions (Berman & Friederwitzer, 1982; Jong-hee, 1984; Orlich, 1989). That the inservice should not be hit-and-run, but that rather there should be continued contact and support from the instructor/leader is emphasized (Dept. of HEW, 1980; Egan, 1986; Joyce & Showers, 1988; Purinton, 1983). In the light of the above, the author determined to make every effort to accommodate teachers with regard to their wishes in this

respect. It went without saying that she would travel to a location convenient to the participants, and she also planned to work with individuals, if they so desired, if at all possible.

Inservice can be focussed on one or both of two levels of learning: awareness on the one hand, and skill acquisition on the other (Dept. of HEW, 1980). In the case of a skills focus, there should be a strong element of conceptual substructure so as to avoid the phenomenon of blind practice (Fullan, 1979; Joyce & Showers, 1988). Formats can include workshops, lectures (perhaps illustrated with slides, films or videos), self-directed-learning packages, demonstration teaching, and displays, and, in terms of timing, include weekly evening sessions, full weekends, short courses during school holidays, and daytime sessions on released time (Johnson, 1971). While self-instruction packages and demonstration teaching were not regarded as feasible, the author decided to supplement a practical workshop format with a book of selected readings which would help supply the conceptual basis for the ideas being dealt with, and to negotiate the best sequence and number of sessions for the particular group of teachers involved.

Several writers offer recommendations about the learning needs and styles of adults and of elementary teachers in particular. In general, adults prefer experiences which are job-relevant and thrifty with their

time, and which allow for active participation, flexibility, experiential outlets for the prompt appliction of skills or knowledge (Orlich, 1989), and in which their present knowledge and skill can be displayed and shared with others (Dept. of HEW, 1980; Griffin, 1983; Shepardson, 1984). Elementary school teachers especially look for practical ideas to help them solve their problems and which they can put into use immediately (Egan, 1986). Inservice in which the subject matter and the manner in which it is taught are both transferable to the teacher's repertoire (e.g. using cooperative learning strategies to present information on process writing) are especially effective (Berman & Friederwitzer, 1982; Egan, 1986). Bierly and Berliner (1982) found that these teachers prefer that the inservice instructor have personal classroom teaching experience. The author was able to meet these requirements, in that she has been a preschool and primary teacher for twenty-five years, and, as an adult educator, is well known in the province for presenting lively, informative sessions in a manner which involves the participants in plenty of cooperative mental, verbal and physical activity. She had long made a practice of planning so that both the substance of her presentations and the way she taught were immediately useable by teachers.

Specific components of inservice sessions are suggested by Joyce and Showers (1988): exploration of theory through lectures, discussions and readings, multiple demonstrations or modelling (live, simulated or video) of a new skill,

practice under conditions close to the actual, prompt non-evaluative feedback, and supportive coaching. All of these elements were incorporated into the experiences which the author developed as part of the solution strategy.

The literature yields few references to inservice education specifically on the topic of play. One article which turned up when the ERIC net was cast dealt with science education, not play, but included the useful information that a very successful staff development project in science teaching had the teachers plunge right into hands-on investigation of materials, with virtually no preamble; only after observing, testing and classifying their materials did the group receive any lecture input about how children learn science (Brown et al., 1986). The author planned to incorporate this do-first, talk-later approach into the first session of the inservice series she devised.

Ovens' (1980) article on a program for training of play leaders simply names the components of the program without giving details. Gower's (1987) description of a staff development program in play facilitation is somewhat more revealing, but only of its structure (workshops followed by discussion, spaced some weeks apart, with trainers available to work in classrooms with teachers between times), not its content. The most forthcoming piece on staff development in the area of play is that of Stalmack (1981). She recognized that teachers operate according to the "reality structure" (from Harris, 1984, quoted on p. 17) of day-to-day

pressures, rather than according to what they learned in pre-service courses. Hence, her program is an on-the-job model, in which the teaching day becomes an inservice day, in this manner; teachers exchange play equipment and study how children in their own setting use it. At the same time, they study relevant written materials and compare their own observations to those in the texts. Meetings and workshops are held every few weeks for comparing notes and sharing information. As closure, teachers evaluate the impact of the experience on their classes, and formulate a curriculum position statement for their own use. Stalmack's program has many of the ingredients seen as effective for inservice, as well as these novel approaches, and the author studied it carefully in designing the solution strategy for the present problem.

Description and Justification of the Solution Selected

The most appropriate solution to the problem appeared to be the following:

Using the initial survey of teachers as a needs assessment, the author would design a set of inservice learning experiences focussing on skills of observation and assessment combined with information about play activity derived from research literature and professional practice literature. (See below for full description of the inservice.) She would arrange with the appropriate personnel in the three school boards surveyed, and where the issue is regarded by teachers as a professional concern (Dept. of HEW, 1980; Fullan, 1979; Greer, 1979; Jong-hee, 1984; Shepardson, 1984), to present a "programatic" (Shepardson, 1984) series of workshops, the number varying as suits the needs and the schedules of the teachers involved, but ideally at least four sessions, in a location likewise most convenient to them (Berman & Friederwitzer, 1982; Jong-hee, 1984; Orlich, 1989). She would also contact administrators in other boards to offer the series to interested personnel there. She would request that teachers be invited to participate on the basis of interest, rather than being required to attend, since voluntary participation is associated with greater enthusiasm and longer lasting effects than forced participation (Griffin, 1983; Purinton,

1983). She would also request that a ceiling of about twenty-five to thirty participants be set, in order to permit individual attention and small group work. She would formulate objectives and plan input for each session and have the objectives and descriptions available for the participants at the first session (Greer, 1979; Fullan, 1979; Orlich, 1989). However, she would also ensure that there was sufficient flexibility to respond to individuals' particular interests and needs (Jong-hee, 1984), and provide a response form for the participants to indicate their wishes at the first session (see Appendix D). She would offer to be available to individuals for consultation and classroom visits in order to provide on-going support (Dept. of HEW, 1980; Egan, 1986; Joyce & Showers, 1988; Purinton, 1983).

The sessions would be planned to be informative and lively from start to finish, so as not to waste teachers' time (Orlich, 1989), and to include practical ideas that teachers could put into use immediately in their classrooms (Egan, 1986). Some time would be devoted to practising skills of observation during the sessions themselves, with teachers working in small groups in order to share knowledge and to coach one another (Dept. of HEW, 1980; Griffin, 1983; Shepardson, 1984). The author would also provide feedback and coaching (Joyce & Showers, 1988). Teaching techniques such as "active participation" (a particular way of framing questions to elicit maximum involvement and thoughtful

responses) which teachers could incorporate into their own practice would be employed (Egan, 1986).

The sessions would be in various formats - active workshops with concrets materials (Brown et al., 1986), practice of observation skills using videotapes, slides and transcripts of play activities, brief lectures, discussions - with small group activities predominating, using elements of cooperative learning strategies (Johnson, 1971; Joyce & Showers, 1988). In order to provide a conceptual substructure (Fullan, 1979; Joyce & Showers, 1988), the author would provide a bibliography (see Appendix C), and a brief book of readings. Such topics as stages in and types of play could be effectively dealt with through readings. One page handouts with schemas for play observation would also be made available and used in the practice sessions. Participants would be asked to keep notes on their experiences with play during the time between the sessions and to share them with the group as a basis for discussion. They would be invited to bring to the sessions any materials they might have about play or observation, also to be shared with the rest of the group (Stalmack, 1981).

The following is a general outline of the content of the sessons. Because there would not be a fixed number of sessions, content is arranged by topic. In some cases, two topics would be covered in one session, while in others, one

topic would be dealt with in two or more sessions. The whole series would be entitled " PLAY - A Four Letter Word".

1. Topic: What is play? What happens when children play? What are the learning outcomes? What is the role of the teacher in the play program?
Purpose: To have personal experience with play; to explore objections to play and discover the values of play; to consider specific learning content in play; to consider the role of the teacher; to generate justifications for play in the curriculum.
Objectives: At the end of the session, and based on their experience in the workshop, participants will name at least ten specific learning outcomes of play, name at least six academic "subjects" touched on in play, name at least six appropriate pedogogical behaviors displayed by the teacher (i.e. the leader) during the experience which fostered creativity and problem solving, and provide at least one justification in the form of a counter-argument to each objection to play mentioned and recorded at the beginning of the session.
Format: Minimum pre-amble, plunge-right-in, hands-on workshop. Participants are asked to generate as many objections to play as possible; these are recorded. Then the participants are directed to tables where "challenges" involving play materials are set up (instructions on cards), such as , "You are the great architect, Frank Lloyd Wrong.

These plastic animals have hired you to design them a condominium entirely of blocks in which each will have separate quarters", or, "This [metal] tiger wants to get across the ocean [tub of water]. The only material in the land of Plasticinia is...plasticine. (But everyone knows plasticine can't float!", and so on. While participants work at these tasks, the leader circulates among them as the teacher, asking questions, drawing out problem solving strategies and giving encouragement. After forty-five minutes or so, the group is reassembled to discuss the experience. They are arranged in groups of about four, and each group formulates responses to one or two of the objections to play, to the question of what the teacher does, or to the question of what is learned in play. After a suitable period of time, they are asked to share their responses with the whole group. The author as leader provides additional input, and the accumulated information is offered to the group as material for them to use as counter-arguments to the criticisms they may face in running play-based programs. It is also suggested that they use this workshop as a model for presentations they could give to parents, colleagues, etc.

2. Topic: Dramatic Play

Purpose: To gain information about dramatic play and its contributions to literacy and social development, and to practice observations of dramatic play for the purpose of

abstracting meta-roles, language-in-role and language-in-negotiation, basic thinking skills and problem solving, and identifying stages and levels of skill in dramatic play.

Objectives: At the end of the session, and using a videotaped and a transcribed episode of dramatic play, participants will correctly name behaviors as revealing various meta-roles, various language usages, various thinking skills and various problem solving skills, and express a high degree of agreement with fellow participants regarding the stage and skill level the videotaped child reveals.

Format: Mini-lecture and observation practice. The leader gives a brief mini-lecture on the benefits of dramatic play and its relationship to school skills, drawn from current literature. Participants are given handouts which provide schema for observing the thinking skills, etc. A short video clip is shown; participants are asked to identify the stage and skill level of the child, and to check off specific thinking skills, etc. which they see in the play episode. In small groups, they compare their observations with others, to obtain some degree of inter-rater reliability, as it were. A transcript of a play episode is given, and participants identify particular meta-roles, problem solving skills, etc. as they perceive them to have appeared in the episode. Again, these observations are compared and discussed in small groups and with the leader. Suggestions for enhancing dramatic play are presented.

3. Topic: Constructive Play I; Block Play.

Purpose: To have first-hand play experience with blocks; to observe basic thinking skills and mathematical skills in block play; to identify stages in block play; to perceive the contribution of block play to the development of literacy and numeracy.

Objectives: Shown a set of slides of children's block constructons, participants will correctly name the stage of block building and the basic thinking skills revealed in each. Given a handout with a growth scheme for block play, participants will make the analogy between dramatic play with blocks and the concept of story (setting, plot, characters, dialogue, etc.). Given a set of building blocks and time to play with them, participants will correctly name the basic thinking skills and mathematical skills revealed in their own constructions.

Format: Mini-lecture, observation practice and play workshop. The leader gives a brief mini-lecture about basic thinking skills. The participants are given handouts with growth schemes for block play and outlines of basic thinking skills, and time to discuss them. Then a set of slides is shown , and participants identify first the stages and the the basic thinking skills and math skills revealed in the constructions shown in each slide. They then compare and discuss their observations in small groups and with the leader. Then the participants are given blocks and time to play with them freely. They are then asked to identify the

mathematical and thinking skills they used to build their constructions. The leader offers ideas on how to enhance block play.

4. Constructive Play II; Art and Sand Play.
Purpose: To learn the different stages in art and sand play; to become aware of the value of these activities, and of their contribution to literacy and to social and emotional development.
Objectives: When presented with slides showing exanples of childen's art work and sand play, participants will correctly name the stage represented and suggest plausible analogies with developing literacy.
Format: Mini-lecture and observation practice. The leader presents a mini-lecture supported with an illustrated handout on children's art development. Then participants view slides of children' paintings and drawings, and identify the stages represented. They then share and discuss their observations with the rest of the group. Suggestions for enhancing art activity are offered. Sand play is treated similarly. Suggestions for enhancement are shared.

Additional topics could include types and contributions of playthings, and the therapeutic value of play and playthings. As mentioned earlier in this section, scheduling would be kept flexible so as to permit the addressing of topics of special concern to the participants.

The author believed that this solution strategy would be effective because it responds to the stated needs of teachers in a fashion which has the characteristics of effective inservice; that is, participant-centered, informative and substantial in providing approaches to the observation and assessment of play, with opportunities for practice, which would allow teachers to be accountable to parents and the public about children's learning while providing a developmentally appropriate, play-oriented program.

Report of Action Taken

In the course of contacting the primary consultants in the three boards of educaton whose teachers were surveyed in the needs assessment, the author also put the collection of materials for the in-service sessions into high gear. The latter process included taking slides of children's art work and block constructions, compiling observation guides for such activities as sand play and block play, searching out and arranging for copyright clearance, developing new and intriguing "challenges" for Session One of the inservice experiences, and selecting video clips to illustrate certain aspects of play.

The primary education consultant of Board "A", located in an area far distant from university centres, was very pleased to arrange inservice. It had in fact been she who helped spark the project, unbeknownst to her, when during the previous year she had contacted the author to do a workshop on observation skills, in the hope that "someone from the big city" would be willing to make the long trek to her area. In the first flush of enthusiasm, she wrote to her primary teachers proposing six to eight sessions, on two consecutive days per week for three or four weeks. The author would drive to the area and stay overnight with one of the participants, leaving after the second of the week's sessions. However, as it turned out, because of budget constraints, it was not possible to obtain release time for

the teachers (the author was to work for expenses only), so that this rosy scenario did not materialize. Instead, only two sessions, a month apart, were actually held. The first session was specially scheduled for after school (4:30 to 8:00 pm. with supper part way through). The space, in a school library whose furniture had to pushed aside and then re-arranged at the end, was inadequate and awkward. Over fifty people participated - too many, to cramped and too weary to derive the best from the experience. Gratifyingly, however, everyone stayed through to the end, although the activities scheduled for the latter part of the session were rushed and failed to ignite the hoped-for involvement. Sone of the participants had a one hundred mile trip home, and school the next day. That they were edgy and distracted as 8:00 pm. drew near quite understandable. Because the second session was scheduled on a regular professional development day on which there was a choice of many other workshops, only about twenty-five participants appeared. Of these, however, most were from the original group. This session dealt solely with dramatic play, and so was more focussed and productive .

The consultant had canvassed her teachers regarding interest in further sessions, and the response was very positive. However, two factors conspired against the plan. From September to December the author taught classes every day at her own institution, a one hundred and fifty mile drive away, and from January to May of the next term, the

weather in this board's area would be unpredictable and treacherous. A nearly two hundred mile long strip along the eastern edge of one of the Great Lakes, this area is notorious snow squall country. Even if the author could manage to get to the area, many of the participants might not be able to safely travel to whatever centre was selected for the session. Regretfully, the author and the consultant agreed that their plans were impossible given the circumstances, and thus the first phase of the implementation process came to a tenuous and disappointing conclusion.

In Board "B", a more compact and less meteorologically vulnerable area, the situation was more favourable in matters of travel, but worse in what the professional development budget and time constraints would allow. The original three daytime sessions planned for had to be collapsed into one after-school workshop for an anticipated forty-five to sixty people. In actuality, principals and even the board superintendant joined the teachers who crowded the gym at this 4:30 to 8:00 pm. session, bringing the total to more than eighty! While it was gratifying that these administrators were on hand (and actually participated), it created a situation far from what was intended. In anticipation of sixty people, the author had requested that the participants bring sets of blocks (block play and dramatic play were the topics), and so fortunately there were enough materials to go around. During the

presentation, the author made it her business to get to every part of the room , to interact with all the groups as they engaged in the activity and/or discussion opportunities which were built into the session at frequent intervals. In spite of the odds against, this session worked reasonably well; the author turned her energy level up high, and many of the participants appeared as tuned in and intelligently responsive as if there had been far fewer people. The leaning objectives for these particular topics were apparently met in many cases, judging by the verbal feedback. On the other hand, the author noticed that a number of people slipped out towards the end of the session.

Although these situations were not total losses by any means, neither were they anything like exemplars of the ideal solution strategy as planned. More cases of this nature simply could not be permitted to occur. Hence, in making arrangements with two more boards ("D" and "E"), the author make it as clear as she politely could that it was critically important to arrange at least three sessions per series, and of course more if possible. Fortunately, this condition was met. (At this point, it must be noted that it proved impossible to arrange a series for Board "C", one of the original three in which the needs assessment was carried out. There simply were no open slots in the professional development schedule for the year.)

In Board "D", located in a major urban centre, the consultants were very enthusiastic and especially

cooperative, inasmuch as the proposed series meshed very felicitously with the already ongoing profession development for the early primary teachers. Aspects of the play series would be explicitly integrated with the work already being done on language development and observation. Release time was arranged so that approximately twenty teachers could attend three sessions of three hours each on mornings two weeks apart. This arrangement permitted the author to offer, for the first time, the entire sequence of topics, only slightly compressed. That the sessions took place in the morning meant that the participants were fresh and alert, and the three hour time span permitted several breaks, as well as plenty of opportunity for discussion, the raising of concerns and so on. The consultants also found an ideal location, central for the teachers, with excellent space, furnishings, lighting and audio-visual facilities (not to speak of elegant snacks of croissants and fresh fruit for the breaks). These factors were a distinct enhancement of the whole experience.

For this series, the author developed a closure cum advance organizer device for each session (see Appendix E), intended as a way of assessing the impact of the workshop and giving a focus for thinking ahead to the next one. By this means, the author could gauge what an individual had derived from a session, and get a sense of any foggy areas that still lingered. At the outset of the subsequent session, she would spend twenty minutes to half an hour

reviewing individuals' concerns and soliciting the combined wisdom of the other participants in responding to them. The side effect of this procedure was that a sense of community and mutual support developed, and the perception that expertise resides only in the presenter was reduced.

The advance organizer referred to was in the form of a suggestion for classroom observations, and this "homework" was also discussed before the topic input for the day began, as a way of leading into it. While to be sure not everyone did their "homework", enough usually had so that there could be a useful discussion.

It may be noted that the consultants joined in the sessions, as did the superintendant of curriculum. Their participation was a gratifying indication of the value placed on play by the administrators of this board. The overall response to the series in this board was very positive; one long-time teacher was heard to say that it was the best professional development she had ever experienced.

Before describing the implementation in Board "E", the author must do some backtracking. During the somewhat disappointing period of implementation in Boards "A" and "B", three encouraging events occurred, one directly tied to the solution plan, and the other two serendipitous but germane. In the latter category were a conference presentation and a television appearance. The author was contacted by the organizer of the annual conference of the local branch of the provincial E.C.E. association to fill in

at a late - if not last - moment for a cancelled presenter. The author presented the initial workshop of the "Play - a Four Letter Word" series to an enthusiastic group of about twenty -five people, and was consequently invited to present on play both at the big provincial conference to be held the following spring and at the annual conference of community college E.C.E. programs, also in the spring. The television appearance was on the Youth T.V. Network program, "Positive Parenting", a talk-show format program in which guests are interviewed on topics of interest and concern to parents. The author did two fifteen minute segments in which cognitive development through play was briefly explored. Spinoffs from this appearance were invitations to present to two parent organizations and a local day care teachers' association.

The event that <u>was</u> part of the solution plan, although realized sooner than anticipated, was the go-ahead to offer a course in play within the program at the author's own institution. The proposal was made in the fall of 1990, and because there was a "catch-all" course slot in the calendar with the usefully vague designation "Special Topics" and a computer identification number, it was possible to slip it in for the January to April term without having to wade through layers of bureaucracy for approval (see Appendix F). Twice as many students signed up for it than could be accommodated. (It now has been granted official approval and is listed in the calendar under its own name and number for

the next academic year.)

This course began at about the same time as the sessions for Boards "D" and "E". It required careful organization to keep track of what group was doing what at any particular time, and to ensure that there were plenty of all the requisite materials. There also was the risk of the leader becoming somewhat "burnt out" and weary of the topic. Fortunately, the play course allowed for extra topics such as play therapy to be included, and the small research projects done by the students kept things interesting. The author also make it her business to concoct yet more new activities for the "challenges" part of the initial session; this meant new and different responses from participants for the leader to react to, thus reducing the threat of boredom.

Now to the implementation in Board "E". Always a leader in innovative programming, this board has done more than piously hope that day care and kindergarten personnel in its jurisdiction will collaborate and communicate for the well-being of children (there are day care centres in all of its elementary schools). It has purposefully brought them together in a coalition, in which kindergarten teachers and day care givers are paired up, given time to consult with each other and given special professional development. It is no surprise that the consultants in this board (also in a large urban area) were more than enthusiastic to have an inservice series in play observation and assessment offered on a silver platter, as it were. They were very

accommodating regarding arrangements - four sessions of one and a half hours each (4:30 to 6:00 pm.) one month apart. They also, like their counterparts in Board "D", were able to provide good space, furnishings, audio-visual equipment and appealing snacks. The author was able to present the entire sequence of topics to a group that varied in number between twenty to thirty persons, according to the vagaries of health, energy levels, weather and other shocks that flesh is heir to. They were very responsive and enthusiastic, in spite of coming after school, and like the group in Board "D", developed a sense of community. Given the opportunity presented by the author, through the closure/advance organizer device (see Appendix E), they acted as resources for one another. Discussion and responses at each session suggested that the objectives for each were met.

Following the close of this phase, the consultants in this board asked the author to "play it again, Sam" for the daycare - kindergarten coalition in another family of schools. Unfortunately, it turned out to be too late in the year for a series of sessions, so an all-day workshop was held (9:00 am. to 3:00 pm.), a less-than-ideal alternative. The space and facilities available this time were also less than ideal, but the session was reasonably effective, perhaps because a smaller number of participants (twenty) were involved. Of course, discussion and sharing were more limited, and the author was unable to adjust the session to

individual needs.

It must be noted at this point that, although research suggests that supportive classroom visits by the inservice course leader are highly desirable for effective implementation, this part of the plan proved impossible. The number of individuals served (approximately 250) and the author's teaching and administrative responsibilities to her own institution made such visits impracticable.

At about the same time as the one day session for Board "E" was given, the two conferences took place - both on the same day! The author gave a morning and an afternoon session to about thirty people all told at one conference, and then drove seventy miles to give an evening presentation to yet another forty people at the other conference. These workshops appear to have been succesful in terms of participants'interest and enthusiasm, but the author does not recommend this as standard practice.

The final phase in the implementation of the solution strategy was the offering of a one week short summer course in play assessment by the author, at her institution in collaboration with the school of continuing studies at her university. This course was proposed in February and approved in March, whereupon a concerted campaign was undertaken to publicize the course to both primary teachers and early childhood educators (see Appendices G and H) . A cut-off of twenty participants was set with minimum of sixteen before the course wcould actually go ahead. By mid-

June this target had been met and after one more applicant was squeezed in, entry was closed. The course ran five mornings a week (9 am. to 12 noon) for one week in July. It was kept intentionally to this length as it seemed more likely that day care and nursery teachers would be able to participate in a shorter rather than longer course. There were no formal assignments or evaluation, but participants who attended regularly would receive a certificate of achievement. Sessions took place in a basement room of the author's institution (an old house), not an ideal space, but blessedly cool. Although some what cramped, and with many having to go back to work in the afternoon, all the registrants stayed for the entire week. The group was composed of day care providers, nursery school supervisors, community college ECE's, kindergarten and grade one teachers, and supervisors of family service agencies, a rich mixture for the mutual problem-solving and advising that took place. Again, the entire sequence of topics was offered, along with plenty of time for discussion of concerns (see Appendix I) and for "taking up the homework" (see Appendices J and K). The text referred to in the "homework" is Play in the Lives of Children (Cosby & Sawyers, 1989). Within each session, it appeared that the internal objectives were met, and beyond that, many interesting questions were raised by individuals. At the end of the week, several participants commented that they would have liked a longer course, because they realized there was

much more to learn.

The completion of the summer course saw the end of the immplementation period for this practicum. Further developments will be discussed in the Plans section in Chapter V.

At the end of each series of learning experiences (including the one-day sessions, but excluding the conference or parent meeting presentations), participants were given response forms on which to evaluate the sessions (see Appendix B). The results of these questionaires are presented and discussed in Chapter V.

Action Calendar

Board A. Oct. 11, 1990. 55 participants.
Oct. 28, 1990. 25 participants.

Board B. Nov. 15. 1990. 80+ participants.

Board D. Jan. 23, Feb. 6, Feb. 22, 1991. 21+ participants.

Author's Institution. January through April, 1991. One class per week. 20 participants.

Board E (1). Jan. 17, Feb. 21, March 21, April 18, 1991. 34 participants.

Board E (2). May 13, 1991. 20 participants.

Summer Course. July 8 through 12, 1991. 20 participants.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

A brief questionaire (see Appendix B) was distributed to participants at the end of each series of learning experiences. They were asked to complete them and leave them at a designated spot as they left the room. Anonymity was ensured by not having a place for a name or signature on the sheet, announcing that participants should not put their names on the sheet and by the author's absenting herself from the drop-off area area during the time when the forms were being put there.

The plan for quantitative analysis of the data was as follows. Responses to each item on the questionaire would be tallied to determine the frequency of each of the four possible choices, from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" for each of the items. A two-thirds majority of positive responses ("strongly agree" and "agree") would be considered evidence that the solution strategy was successful. The written comments would also be reviewed; it was anticipated that if the strategy was effective, the majority of these would be of a positive nature, regarding both the content of the experiences and the manner in which the experiences were delivered.

A group by group review of the results follows.

1. Board "A". About fifty people participated in the first (evening) session and about twenty-five in the second (PD day) session. Twenty-three questionaires were returned. The results, as may be seen in Table 4 , are entirely positive. Given the less than ideal circumstances, it is not surprising that there were fewer "strongly agree" than "agree" responses. Comments written by the respondents were positive in tone, but reflected the difficulties of the circumstances: "I really enjoyed the hands-on approach but feel I still need much more help in this area"; "I was very tired by the end - couldn't we have these workshops closer to [my community]?"; "As I begin using some the useful info. acquired I'm sure I will gain more self confidence"; "Very helpful, practical sessions. Thankyou!"

Table 4

Number of Responses to Choices in Questionaire. Board A

Item	Str'ly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Str'ly Disagree
1. Met needs.	9	14	-	-
2. Knowledge base.	11	12	-	-
3. Observe play.	10	13	-	-
4. Report.	8	15	-	-
5. Help others.	11	12	-	-

2. Board "B". About eighty people were present at this single session. Sixty-four completed questionaires were returned. As may be seen in Table 5 , the majority of responses were positive, but that there were some negative responses in not surprising, in that the circumstances were very unfavourable, and contrary to what research suggests for effective professional development programs - that is, it was a one-shot marathon in an uncomfortable setting with too many people. As may be seen, the most negative responses were to item 1, which addresses the design of the inservice. There was less negativity regarding the content of the session and the learnings derived. Comments included: "It was hard to try and absorb so much after a long day at school"; "The handouts were great but I feel a bit overwhelmed"; "The speaker is very well organized, but it shouldn't be crammed into one workshop."

Table 5

Number of Responses to Choices in Questionaire. Board B

Item	Str'ly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Str'ly Disagree
1. Met needs.	15	36	11	2
2. Knowledge base.	27	35	2	-
3. Observe play.	28	33	3	-
4. Report.	13	47	4	-
5. Help others.	21	38	5	-

3. Board "D". Twenty-one teachers registered for the inservice of three three-hour morning sessions, but extra people attended. Twenty-five questionaires were handed in. Table 6 reveals a uniformly positive response. Comments were relatively few from this group, perhaps because they had to hurry back to their schools to teach in the afternoon. Some comments were: "Great information/support"; "It was wonderful to actually play, to feel/remember what it is like and to be able to then use our experiences as the basis for discussion." Two respondents expressed caution - "I would like to read a few more articles to better familiarize myself with reporting to parents", "I'll always have more [learning] needs to meet."

Table 6

Number of Responses to Choices in Questionaire. Board D

Item	Str'ly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Str'ly Disagree
1. Met needs.	14	11	-	-
2. Knowledge base.	19	6	-	-
3. Observe play.	12	13	-	-
4. Report.	10	15	-	-
5. Help others.	11	14	-	-

4. Board "E"., Group 1. Thirty-four teachers registered for the series (four after-school session over four months); about twenty-five attended the final session, and seventeen questionaires were handed in. The results are strongly positive, and there were many enthusiastic comments; "Well presented - was alive and informative"; "These meetings have given me more confidence." In this board, close to two major universities, teachers have the latest information on their doorstep, unlike those in Board "A". However, many work in areas where high-powered "yuppie" parents pressure teachers hard for academic programs. Several teachers said to the author that the sessions had provided them with courage and counterarguments to such parents. They also reacted to the series as a learning experience: "As an experienced teacher I was challenged to think about play along different dimensions"; "As convenor and peer coach this series has helped me with my dialogue with my peers - thankyou!"; "I have probably heard or read much of this before, but it was presented in such a meaningful way that invited me to rethink the whole area." This last comment suggests that the workshops did more than "furnish the mind" with shiny new items of knowledge, but actually helped individuals renovate and remodel their thinking about play, children and teaching.

Table 7

Number of Responses to Choices in Questionaire. Board E, 1.

Item	Str'ly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Str'ly Disagree
1. Met needs.	12	5	-	-
2. Knowledge base.	12	5	-	-
3. Observe play.	9	8	-	-
4. Report.	8	9	-	-
5. Help others.	8	9	-	-

5. Board "E", Group 2. Twenty teachers attended this single all-day session. Seventeen handed in completed questionaires. Table 8 reveals, not surprisingly, that responses were not so sanguine as for Group 1, although still prediminantly positive. The comments underscore the drawbacks of a one-shot session; "Need more time"; "Two 1/2 days would be preferable"; "This was a lot to take in and I wasn't as attentive in PM."

Table 8

Number of Responses to Choices in Questionaire. Board E, 2.

Item	Str'ly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Str'ly Disagree
1. Met needs.	4	13	-	-
2. Knowledge base.	5	12	-	-
3. Observe play.	7	10	-	-
4. Report.	7	10	-	-
5. Help others.	7	9	1	-

6. Author's Institution Winter Course. Twenty students participated in a fourteen week, two credit hour course. It was not evaluated using the questionaire in Appendix B, because two other forms (a written and a computer-scored type) were imposed by the institution, and the author did not want to sour the students with yet another evaluation. The computer-scored evaluation contained thirty-seven statements, each with five possible choices , from "very good" through "very poor", with thirteen additional items having differing response formats (see Appendix L). Sixteen students returned the forms. In 499 out of the total of 592 responses to items 1 through 37, the course was rated as "very good" or "good". In only eight responses was it rated as less than "moderate". The written evaluation sheets (see Appendix M) had such comments as: "[The instructor] was fabulous!"; "The instructor was enthusiastic, well prepared and flexible. It was a pleasure to attend the class"; "[I liked] working with materials in class and discussing with peers"; "The assignments were practical and useful", and so on. There were some criticisms; most students disliked the text ("too wordy, dry"), and several students in the counselling and assessment option (as distinct from the early elementary education option) stated that the course was not sufficiently relevant or useful to them.

7. Summer Short Course. Twenty-one individuals participated in this five morning, week long course. Twenty attended the

final session and returned questionaires. As Table 9 shows, their responses were the most strongly positive of all the groups. The cameraderie developed over the week and the time available for discussion and sharing of ideas among the group may have accounted for some of this enthusiasm. Comments support this view; "I enjoy the time allotment for interaction and discussion with my colleagues. It's always nice to learn from others'experiences." In addition to many expressions of enthusiasm and references to specific learnings gained, there were several suggestions that the course be longer: "There is certainly an abundance of knowledge which can be explored with more depth given a longer session for the course"; "I could have used much more time"; "We only touched the tip of the iceberg."

Table 9

Number of Responses to Choices in Questionaire. Summer.

Item	Str'ly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Str'ly Disagree
1. Met needs.	13	7	-	-
2. Knowledge base.	15	5	-	-
3. Observe play.	13*	6	-	-
4. Report.	13	7	-	-
5. Help others.	14	6	-	-

* Note: No response to item 3 from one respondent.

Conclusions

From these results, it is very evident that the solution strategy was successful. The stated objectives - that teachers would express greater confidence in their knowledge and skill in observing, assessing and reporting play behavior, and express satisfaction with the way in the learning experience was delivered - were met. It would appear that for the majority of the individuals reached by this project, the learning experiences met a genuine need in a manner which they found both enjoyable and useful. That the sessions had been planned in accordance with research findings probably accounts for much of the satisfaction; the entertaining personal style of the leader appears to have also played a role. The content of the sessions was also planned to be very substantial, so as to provide participants with as much "bang for their buck" as possible; most participants seem to have felt that the time spent was well spent.

The underlying goal of the practicum was to increase the on-the-job competence of teachers to be accountable in the developmentally appropriate program. Within the limitations of this project, it was not possible to ascertain such a change, since the design was not an experimental intervention. However, this might well be a subsequent project, although admittedly a large and challenging one.

Recommendations

Others who might wish to undertake a project such as that described in this report might consider these suggestions.

1. Start the planning process early; schedules and budgets for inservice are generally set six months to a year in advance, so that one must assume that for any particular year, the arrangements should be firming up about a year before actual delivery starts. Allow plenty of lead time for consultation and needs assessment.

2. Make a careful effort to tailor the proposed program to the particular needs and circumstances of the different boards of education, districts or "client" groups you are dealing with. Tailoring might mean alterations in content, scheduling, locations, length of series, manner of delivery and so on, while maintaining the essential elements of the topic.

3. In making scheduling arrangements, insist that there be a sufficient number of sessions - no fewer than three, and preferably six to eight - and that sessions be no less than one and a half hours, but ideally up to three hours in length. This would provide the time for adequate exploration and digestion of the now-considerable amount of information

available about play. Eschew "one-shot-quickies" as inimical to the goals of worthwhile professional development and quite inadequate to the complex concepts of the subject.

4. Keep group size to twenty-five to thirty participants at most, and strongly suggest that they be volunteers.

5. Negotiate release time for teachers, so that they may participate during the day rather than after-hours.

6. Attempt only one series per school term (or even per year), in order to give time for supportive classroom visits by the course leader. This practice would allow for coaching and feedback, for on-the-job reality testing of the course concepts, and for fine tuning of the workshops as a result.

6. Develop several differing versions of the workshops on each topic. This would keep things fresh for the course leader, especially if running more than one series simultaneously (but see recommendation 6 above), and by extension, for the participants.

Plans and Dissemination

1. At this time, plans are being made for inservice series to be given in two more boards of education in the next school year.

2. It is likely that next summer, the continuing education course will be offered again - perhaps in a longer version, as this year's participants suggested, or perhaps in two or three one-week versions to accommodate more people.

3. The author also intends to approach the provincial ministry of education to explore whether a course in play assessment could be made an official "additional qualification" for certified teachers, in the same manner as advanced post-certification courses in computer education, reading, special education, drama and the like. This would be a major step forward for play.

4. The author has been approached to write a proposal for a text on the observation of young children; such a project would make a fine setting for a section on play assessment.

5. Another natural outgrowth of the present project would be to put this material into video form. The author plans to approach the provincial educational television authority with such a proposal. Were that body not interested, the primary teachers' federation or the media department of one of the larger boards of education might see it as a worthwhile project.

6. The material for this practicum could be written up as a training manual for others who wanted to mount play

assessment courses or inservice in their areas.

7. The practicum material could be utilized in articles addressing the subject of play, of inservice education for practitioners, of accountability in the developmentally appropriate program and of the justification of play in school programs. Such articles could be submitted to various of the journals for practitioners.

8. The author's practicum advisor hs been invited to present on the place of play in the preservice education of teachers at the annual NAEYC conference in November of 1991, and the author will be contributing to this presentation.

References

Amos, N.G. & Benton, G.J.(1988, November). Teacher attitudes towards staff development and related activities in a rural educational consortium. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Louisville, KY.

Athey, I. (1984). Contributions of play to development. In T.D. Yawkey & A. Pellegrini (Eds.), Child's play: Developmental and applied. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Athey, I. (1988). The relation of play to cognitive, language and moral development. In D. Bergen (Ed.), Play as a mediun for learning and development: A handbook of theory and practice. (pp. 81-101). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Bergen. D. (1988). Methods of studying play. In D. Bergen (Ed.), Play as a medium for learning and development: A handbook of theory and practice. (pp. 27-44). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Berman, B. & Friederwitzer, F.J. (1982). A research-based staff development model: The premise and the program. Staten Island, NY: Educational Support Systems, Inc.

Bierly, M.M. & Berliner, D.C. (1982). The elementary school teacher as learner. Journal of Teacher Education, 33(6), 37-40.

Brown, I.D. & al. (1986). Staff development project - science. Grades K - 6. Mississipi Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Inc. Jackson.

Christie, J.F. & Johnsen, E. P. (1987). Reconceptualizing constructive play: A review of the literature. Merrill-Palmer Quarterly. 33(4), 439-452.

Christie, J.F. (1982). Sociodramatic play training . Young Children. 37(4), 25-32.

Cocks, J. (1990, June). Let's get crazy! Time, pp. 38-39.

Curry, N. & Bergen, D. (1988). The relationship of play to emotional, social and gender/sex role development. In D. Bergen (Ed.), Play as a medium for learning and development: A handbook of theory and practice. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Dansky, J.L. (1980). Make-believe: A mediator of the relationship between play and associative fluency. Child Development, 51, 576-579.

Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare (1980). Strategies for planning staff development programs: A web of knowledge. Washington, DC.

Donmoyer, R. (1981). The politics of play: Ideological and organizational constraints on the inclusion of play experiences in the school curriculum. Journal of Research and Development in Education, 14(3), 11-16.

Dorner, J. N. & Knowles, D.W. (1980). Supervised play practice with children: A program for student teachers. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 5(1), 1-10.

Dorsey, A.G. (1989). The dilemma for teacher educators. In C. Kamii (Ed.), Achievement testing in the early grades: The games grownups play. Washington: NAEYC.

Doyle, A. & Connolly, J. (1987). Negotiation and enactment in social pretend play: Relations to social acceptance and social cognition. Ottawa, Ont.: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Eden , S.T.P. (1988). The influence of environmental factors on the quality of sociodramatic play in kindergarten. Unpublished doctoral thesis. University of Toronto.

Egan, C.B. (1986, November). The gifted child in the regualr classroom: Inservice program for the classroom teacher. Paper presented at the Annual Conference to the National Council of States on Inservice Education , Nashville, TN.

Enslein, J.P. & Fein, G.G.(1981). Temporal and cross-situational stability of children's social and play behavior. Developmental Psychology, 17(6), 760-761.

Fenson, L & Schell, R.E. (1986). The origins of exploratory play. In P.K. Smith, Childrens Play: Research developments and practical applications. London: Gordon & Breach.

Fullan, M. (1979). School focused in-service education in Canada. Toronto: Centre for Educational Research and Innovation.

Gowen, J.W. (1987). Facilitating play skills: Efficacy of a staff development program. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 2(1), 55-66.

Glickman, C.D. (1981). Play and the school curriculum. Journal of Research and Development in Education, 14(3), 1-10.

Greer, P. (1979). Education's stepchild, inservice training. Occasional paper 28. Council for Basic Education. Washington , DC.

Griffin, G.A. (1983). Implications of research for staff development. The Elementary School Journal, 83(4), 414-425.

Ishee, N. & Goldhaber, J. (1990). Story re-enactment : Let the play begin. Young Children, 45(3), 70-75.

Jennings,K.D. & Connors,R.E. (1983, April). Children'S cognitive development and free play: Relationships to mature behavior. Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Detroit.

Johnson, J.E. & Ershler, J. (1980, September). Developmental changes in imaginative play and cognitive abilities of preschoolers. Paper presented at the Annual Convention on the American Psychological Association, Montreal, PQ.

Johnston, D.J. (1971). Teacher's inservice education . Oxford: Penguin.

Jong-hee, R. (1984). Tasks for development of in-service teacher education. Seoul, Korea: Korean Educational Development Institute.

Joyce, B. & Showers, B. (1988). Student achievement through staff development. New York: Longmans.

Kamii, C. & Kamii, M. (1989). Why achievement testing should stop. In Kamii, C. (Ed.), Achievement testing in the early grades: The games grown-ups play. Washington: NAEYC.

McCarty, M.A. (1977). The influence of imaginary play disposition on the learning of social skills . Unpublished doctoral thesis. University of Toronto.

McConkey, R.& Jeffree, D. (1980). Developing children's play. Special Education: Forward Trends, 7(2), 21-23.

Monighan-Nourot, P., Scales, B., Van Hoorne, J. (with Millie Almy) (1987). Looking at children's play. New York: Teachers College.

Morgan-Worsham, D. (1989). The dilemma for principals. In C. Kamii (Ed.), Achievement testing in the early grades: The games grown-ups play. Washington: NAEYC.

Nicholich, L.M. (1977). Beyond sensorimotor intelligence: Assessment of symbolic maturity through analyses of pretend play. Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 23(2). 89-99.

Orlich, D.C. (1989). Staff development: Enhancing human development. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Ovens, N.L.G. (1980). A programme for training play leaders. In P.F. Wilkinson (Ed.), In Celebration of play: An integrated approach to play and child development. London: Croom Helm.

Pellegrini, A.D. (1984). Training teachers to assess

children's play. Journal of Education for Teaching, 10(3), 233-241.

Pepler, D.J. & Ross, H.S. (1981). The effects of play on convergent and divergent problem solving. Child Development. 52, 1201-1210.

Perrone, V. (1989).How did we get here? In C. Kamii (Ed.), Achievement testing in the early grades: The games adults play. Washington: NAEYC.

Popp, L. (1979). The place of the basic thinking skills in reading. St. Catharines, Ont.: OISE Niagara Centre.

Popp, L. (1980). Play behaviors and verbalizations. Unpubliished paper. Brock University, St. Catharines, Ont.

Purinton, M. (1983). Three keys to successful staff development: Evaluation, participant planning, and school-based programming. Report of the Northeast Florida Educational Consortium's Teacher Education Center, Bostwick, FL.

Roskos, K. (1988a, April). The pretend play episode: Location and resemblance to story. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.

Roskos, J. (1988b). A taxonomy of pretend play activity with some implications for literacy development. Research report, John Carroll University, OH.

Rothlein, L. & Brett, A. (1987). Children's, teachers', and parents' perceptions of play. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 2(1), 45-53.

Rubin, K.H., Fein, G.G. & Vandenberg, B. (1983). Play. In E.M. Hetherington, (Ed.), Socialization, personality and social development. Vol. IV of P.H. Mussen (Ed.), Handbook of child psychology, (4th ed.). New York: Wiley.

Rubin, K.H. (1980). Fantasy play: Its role in the development of social skills and social cognition. New Directions for Child Development, 9.

Shepardson, R.(1984). An analysis of staff development activities conducted in Iowa's public elementary schools. Northwest Area Foundation, St. Paul, MN.

Silvern, S.B., Taylor, J.B., Williamson, P.A., Surbeck, E. & Kelley, M.F. (1986). Young children's story recall as a product of play, story familiarity and adult intervention. Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 32(1), 73-86.

Smilansky, S. & Shefatya, L. (1990). Facilitating play: A

medium for promoting cognitive, socio-emotional and academic achievement in young children. Gaithersburg, MD: Psychosocial and Educational.

Smith, D. (1987). A practical guide to play, Piaget and language in preprimary hearing impaired programs. Detroit, MI: Detroit Public Schools Department of Special Education.

Smith , P.K., Takhvar, M., Gore, N. & Vollstedt, R. (1985). Play in young children: Problems of definition, categorisation and measurement. Early Childhood Development and Care, 19, 25-41.

Stalmack, J.E. (1981). S.W.A.P. - Strategies which affect programs: A framework for staff development. Young Children, 36(6), 16-24.

Sutton-Smith, B. (1980). Children's play: Some sources of play theorizing. New Directions for Child Development, 9.

Sutton-Smith, B. K & Kelly-Byrne, D. (1984). The phenomenon of bipolarity in play theories. In T.D. Yawkey and A. Pellegrini (Eds.), Child's play: Developmental and applied. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Tipps, S. (1981). Play and the brain: Relationships and reciprocity. Journal of Research and Development in Education. 14(3), 19-29.

Vandenberg, B. (1980). Play, problem solving and creativity. New Directions for Child Development, 9, 1980.

Wilkinson, H. (1980). Spontaneity and imagination in drama: An investigation. Victoria, Australia: Victoria Education Department.

Williamson, P.A. & Silvern, S.B. (1984). Creative dramatic play. In T.D. Yawkey and A. Pellegrini, (Eds.) Child's play: Developmental and applied. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Yawkey, T.D. (1983). Pretend play and language growth in young children. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University.

Yawkey, T.D. (1981). Sociodramatic play effects on mathematical learning and adult ratings of playfulness in five year olds. Journal of Research and Development in Education, 14(3), 30-39.

APPENDIX A

PLAY SURVEY

Nowadays, considerable attention is being paid to the place of child-directed active learning ("play") in the educational experience of young children. Teachers are being urged to include learning through play in their programs. At the same time, they are being asked to be "accountable" - to justify their programs and practices, and to assure parents and others that children are progressing satisfactorily in their acquisition of skills and knowledge. This apparently contradictory situation can create uncertainty for all involved.

We are interested in knowing your concerns in this area, with a view to creating professional development experiences dealing with these issues. Please take a few moments to respond to this opinionaire, and return it in the envelope provided to: Jen Hardacre, Institute of Child Study, 45 Walmer Rd., Toronto, M5R 2X2, by Thankyou!

Please turn over...

SURVEY ON PLAY

1. I would like to help parents and others understand the value of active learning ("play") in the curriculum.

____ strongly agree Comments
____ agree
____ disagree
____ strongly disagree

2. I feel I need more specific information about play and how it contributes to school learning.

____ strongly agree Comments
____ agree
____ disagree
____ strongly disagree

3. I feel I need more information about what to observe in play behaviour.

____ strongly agree Comments
____ agree
____ disagree
____ strongly disagree

4. I'm not always sure how to record and report play activities in parent conferences and report cards.

____ strongly agree Comments
____ agree
____ disagree
____ strongly disagree

5. The aspects of play I would like to know more about are (check as many as apply, and add as necessary):

____ block play ____ sand play
____ dramatic play ____ water play
____ art ____ puzzles and the like
____ other (list)

APPENDIX B

PLAY INSERVICE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONAIRE

Thankyou for participating in and contributing to this learning experience. Please take a few moments to give us your opinion by responding to the items below. All responses are confidential.

1. The inservice learning activities met my needs for knowledge and skill development as a teacher.

strongly agree Comments

agree

disagree

strongly disagree

2. I feel that I have gained a useful knowledge base about play and how it contributes to school learning.

strongly agree Comments

agree

disagree

strongly disagree

3. I feel I know what to look for when observing play, and how to assess progress.

strongly agree Comments

agree

disagree

strongly disagree

4. I feel prepared to report to parents about their child's play activity and progress.

strongly agree Comments

agree

disagree

strongly disagree

5. I feel able to help others understand the value of play (active learning) in the curriculum.

strongly agree Comments

agree

disagree

strongly disagree

APPENDIX C

Bibiography on Children's Play: Observing and Interacting

Adcock, D. & Segal, M. (1983). Play together, grow together: A cooperative curriculum for teachers of young children. White Plains, NY: Mailman Family.

Beaty, J.J. (1986). Observing development of the young child. (2nd ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Bergen, D. (Ed.) (1988). Play as a medium for learning and development: A handbook of theory and practice. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Frost, J.L. & Sunderlin, S. (Eds.) (1985). When children play: Proceedings of the international conference on play and play environments. Washington: AECEI.

Hartley, R.E. & Goldenson, R.M. (1963). The complete book of children's play. New York: Thomas Crowell.

Hirsch, E.S. (Ed.) (1984). The block book. (Revised ed.) Washington: NAEYC.

Isaksen, J.G. (1986). Watching and wondering: Observing and recording child development. Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield.

Kamii, C. (Ed.) (1989). Achievement testing in the early years: The games grown-ups play. Washington: NAEYC.

Katz, L.G. & Chard, S.C. (1989). Engaging children's minds: The project approach. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Paley, V.G. (1981). Wally's stories. Cambridge, MS: Harvard.

Segal, m. & Adcock, D. (1981). Just pretending: Ways to help children grow through imaginative play. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Singer, D.G. & Singer, J.L. (1977). Partners in play: A step-by-step guide to imaginative play in children. New York: Harper & Row.

Smilansky, S. & Shefatya, L. (1990). Facilitating play: A medium for promoting cognitive, socio- emotional and academic development in young children. Gaithersburg, MD: Psychological and Educational Publications.

Sutton-Smith, B. & S. (1974). How to play with your children (and when not to). New York: Hawthorne.

---------- (1979). Blocks: A creative curriculum for early childhood. Washingto: Creative Associates.

APPENDIX D

"PLAY" - A FOUR LETTER WORD

Your goals for these sessions

These sessions should meet your needs. Please take a moment to jot down particular areas you would like us to work on, talk about and so on.

Particular aspects of play?

Particular problems with play?

Justifying play to others?

Etc.?

Thankyou!

APPENDIX E

CLOSURE/ADVANCE ORGANIZER

CITY OF YORK
PLAY SESSION 2

Something new about dramatic play that I learned today is...

I am still concerned or want to learn more about...

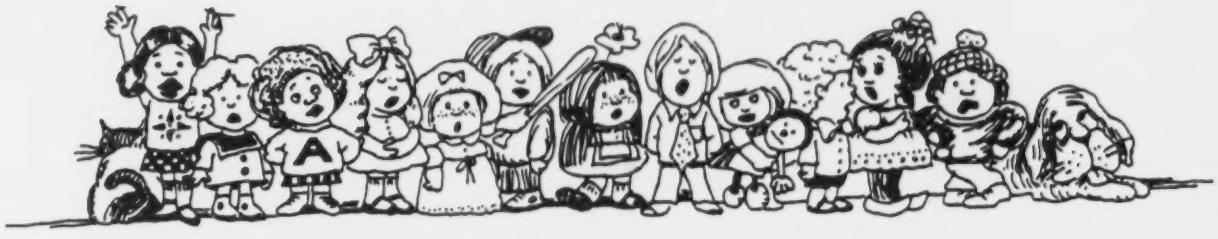
Tear off and hand in.

==========

Tear off and keep.

OBSERVATIONS FOR NEXT SESSION

1. Can different stages be detected in block play? How would you characterize and describe them?
2. Do children use special language when playing with blocks? Collect some samples and see if there is a pattern.
3. Does block play appear to relate to the development of literacy? If so, how? Bring your speculations to share.



APPENDIX F

PROPOSED ELECTIVE COURSE

Course 4062

"PLAY": a four letter word.

Instructor: J. Hardacre

Friday, 1 - 3 pm., Winter Term

Course Description:

"Play" is the subject of considerable controversy today, a bone of contention for both the public and professionals concerned with children. Should children play in school? Does play leave children poorly prepared for the realities of modern life? Is play a plus or a minus to children's mental health? In this course, participants will explore the phenomenon of play and its place in development, mental health and education. Topics will include: classical and contemporary theories of play; how play contributes to and changes with development; the role and significance of playthings; and the assessment of play activity. The latter topic will be especially highlighted iin respect to the needs of the participants as future child life professionals.

In keeping with the subject matter , sessions wiill feature an active workshop approach.

Text: Bergen, Doris (ed.), (1988). Play as a medium for learning and development. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Assignments:

1) A short paper in which the student explores (and perhaps answers) a self-chosen question about the phenomenon of play.

Due: Feb. 14, 1991.

Weight: 30%

2) An assessment of the play activity of a child in the student's placement (or in the ICS Infant Centre, Preschool or Lab School).

Due: Mar. 14, 1991.

Weight: 40%.

3) An open-book, in-class quiz.

Apr. 5, 1991.

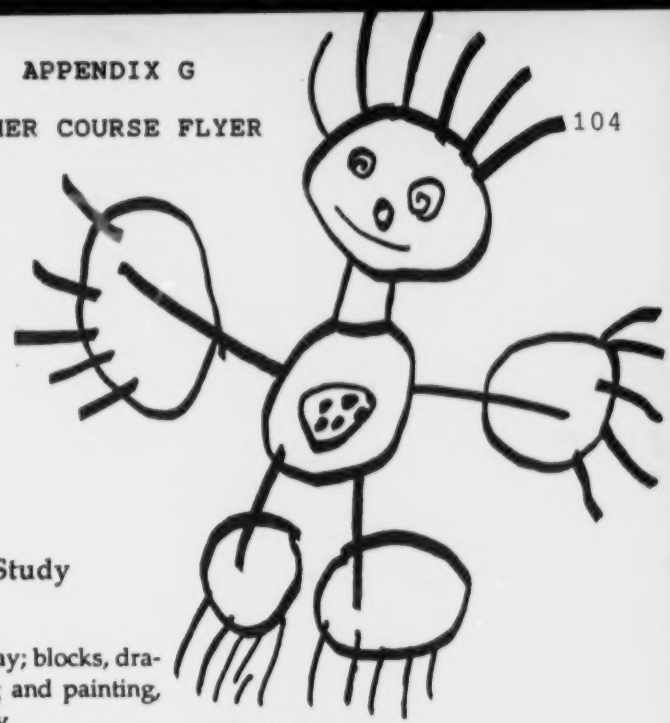
Weight: 30%.

ICS4063 PLAY - a Four Letter Word, Topic Outline

Week	Date	Topic
1	Jan. 11	Introduction, What's wrong with play? Read - Text intro., chpt. 1. Prepare question 1, p. 22
2	Jan. 18	Responses to objections to play, Discuss question 1, p. 22, Discuss assignments. Read - Text chpt. 3 and Ellis essay. In placement, observe children to see correspondence, discrepancy with information in chpt. 3.
3	Jan. 25	NO CLASS - Jen away.
4	Feb. 1	Ages and stages: compare with your observations, Providing developmentally appropriate play opportunities. Read - Text chpt. 8 & 9. Prepare question 2, p. 237.
5	Feb. 8	Discuss question 2, p. 237, Assessing play behaviour: Sand and block play. Read - Text chpt. 10.
6	Feb. 15	Assessing play behaviour: "Art" products. Read - Bk. of Readings: Singer essay, Rubin essay, Bretherton essay. Text chpt. 4.
7	Feb. 22	Assessing play behaviour: Dramatic play I. Read - Bk. of R'dings: Gardner article, de Vries essay. Text chpt. 5. Prepare quest. 2 , p. 100 (end of chpt. 4.)
8	Mar. 1	Assessing play behaviour: Dramatic play II. Read - Bk. of R'dings: Tipps essay, Glickman essay.
9	Mar. 8	Assessing play behaviour: Basic thinking skills I. Read - Shared Discovery (Min. of Ed. curriculum document).
10	Mar. 15	Assessing play behaviour: Basic thinking skills II.
11	Mar. 22	Assessing play behaviour: Problem solving. Read - Bk. of R'dings: play therapy articles.
12	Mar. 29	Play therapy. Read - Text: Porter essay.
13	April 5	Playthings: critical characteristics and contribution to development.
14	April 12	Test - open book.

PLAY

A Four Letter Word



July 8-12, 1991, 9am-noon

Presented by
the University of Toronto
School of Continuing Studies
in cooperation with the Institute of Child Study

Play is the subject of considerable controversy today, a bone of contention for both the public and professionals who are concerned with children. Should children play in school? Does play leave children poorly prepared for the realities of modern life? Does play relate to valued academic goals such as literacy and numeracy? What, if anything, do children learn from play?

In this course, you explore the phenomenon of play and its place in development and education. Topics include:

- how play contributes to and changes with development
- the role and significance of playthings
- the assessment of play; blocks, dramatic play, drawing and painting, water play, sand play
- thinking skills, problem-solving skills, mathematics and literacy, and social development in play.

Consistent with the subject matter, sessions feature an active learning approach.

Who Should Attend?

This course is designed for elementary school teachers, day care workers, nursery school teachers and others who work with children and are interested in discovering more about the implications of play.

The Instructor

Jennifer Hardacre has been a preschool and primary teacher and lecturer on early childhood education for 25 years and is well-known throughout Ontario for her presentations and workshops for teachers and parents. She is the author and narrator of the award-winning video series *Learning through Play*, and has made many media appearances to share her expertise on young children, parenting, education and play. Currently, she is working towards a doctoral degree and teaches future teachers at the Institute of Child Study, University of Toronto.

Registration Form

6 6 0 3 — SCS Course Number
2 3 W — Section
$ 163.00 — Fee

Course Title: **Play — A Four Letter Word**

Date: **July 8-12, 9 am - noon**

Paid by: ☐ cash ☐ money order ☐ cheque
☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

Card # _____

Expiry Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

SCS Student ID

☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Ms. ☐ Miss ☐ Other

Family Name _____ First Name _____

Mailing address: ☐ Home ☐ Business

Number _____ Street _____ Suite/Apt _____

City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____

Residence Telephone _____ Business Telephone, Ext. _____

Employer/Title _____

Registration Status: ☐ Regular ☐ Senior Citizen

Receipt _____ Authorization _____

APPENDIX H

SUMMER COURSE COVERING LETTER

March, 1991

(Name and address)

Re: Summer Course Announcement Flyer

Dear (name)

Today, primary teachers are grappling with two major issues - providing developmentally appropriate programs for youug children, and, at the same time, being accountable to parents and others regarding children's academic progress. These two imperatives appear mutually contradictory to some, but are, in fact, reconcilable. The course announced in the accompanying flyers is designed especially for primary teachers, with the blending of the two concerns in mind. Participants will learn about the contribution of active learning ("play") to the development of academic and social skills, based on the latest research, and will be given techniques for, and practice in, precise observation and assessment of play activity, so as to prepare them for reporting and explaining play progress to parents, colleagues and others in a credible fashion.

We are requesting that these flyers be distributed to the schools in your jurisdiction and posted to the attention of primary teachers. We believe that this course will be of interest to teachers, and ultimately of benefit to the children.

Please contact me at 416-978-5225 if further information is required. Thankyou in advance for your assistance in this project.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hardacre, M.Ed.
Lecturer in Early and Primary Education

APPENDIX I

SUMMER CONCERNS RESPONSE FORM

PLAY - a Four Letter Word

Summer 1991

Something new I learned about play today is...

I am still concerned, or want to learn more about...

APPENDIX J

HOMEWORK 1

PLAY - a Four Letter Word

Summer 1991

Read Chpt....., and think about how you would translate its information into a form accessible to parents and others. That is, how could you make it meaningful, appealing, credible, amusing, digestible, attention-getting, etc.? Select a small, manageable item from the chapter, and come prepared to share how you would present it to people whom you want to inform and persuade.

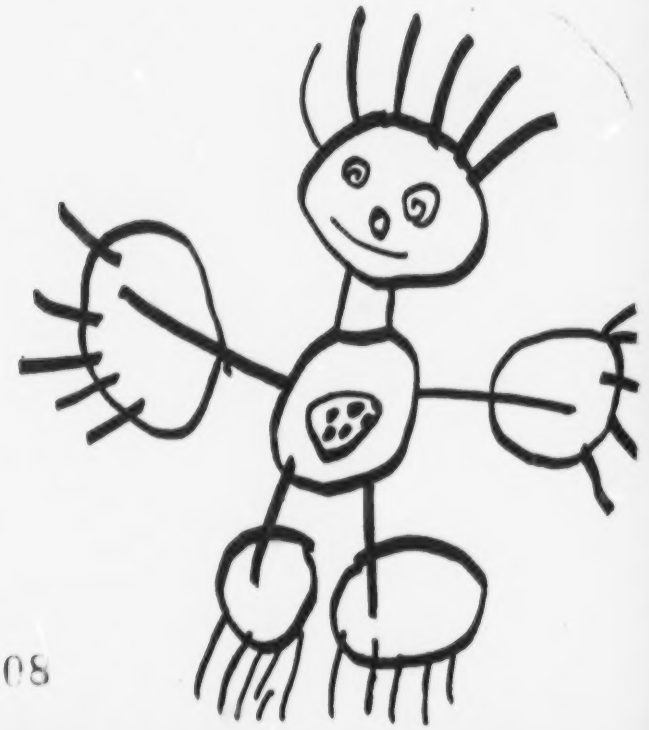
APPENDIX K

HOMEWORK 2

PLAY - a Four Letter Word

Summer 1991

Read Chpt..... and think how you could use the information to develop a means of observing and assessing children's play. Take a small, manageable section or item from the chapter and come prepared to share with us how you "translated" it into an observation instrument.



APPENDIX L

ICS Course Evaluation Question Sheet

As a description of this Course/Instructor, this statement is:

(Select the best response for each of the following statements, leaving a response blank only if it is clearly not relevant)	very good	good	moder-ate	poor	very poor
Learning:					
1 You found the course intellectually challenging and stimulating	A	B	C	D	E
2 You have learned something which you consider valuable	A	B	C	D	E
3 Your interest in the subject has increased as a consequence of this course	A	B	C	D	E
4 You have learned and understood the subject materials in this course	A	B	C	D	E
Enthusiasm:					
5 Instructor was enthusiastic about teaching the course	A	B	C	D	E
6 Instructor was dynamic and energetic in conducting the course	A	B	C	D	E
7 Instructor enhanced presentations with the use of humour	A	B	C	D	E
8 Instructor's style of presentation held your interest during class	A	B	C	D	E
Organization:					
9 Instructor's explanations were clear	A	B	C	D	E
10 Course materials were well prepared and carefully explained	A	B	C	D	E
11 Proposed objectives agreed with those actually taught so you knew where course was going	A	B	C	D	E
12 Instructor gave lectures that facilitated taking notes	A	B	C	D	E

Group Interaction:

13 Students were encouraged to participate in class discussions	A	B	C	D	E
14 Students were invited to share their ideas and knowledge	A	B	C	D	E
15 Students were encouraged to ask questions and were given meaningful answers	A	B	C	D	E
16 Students were encouraged to express their own ideas and/or question the instructor	A	B	C	D	E

Individual Rapport:

17 Instructor was friendly towards individual students	A	B	C	D	E
18 Instructor made students feel welcome in seeking help/advice in or outside of class	A	B	C	D	E
19 Instructor had a genuine interest in individual students	A	B	C	D	E
20 Instructor was adequately accessible to students during office hours or after class	A	B	C	D	E

Breadth:

21 Instructor contrasted the implications of various theories	A	B	C	D	E
22 Instructor presented the background or origin of ideas/concepts developed in class	A	B	C	D	E
23 Instructor presented points of view other than his/her own when appropriate	A	B	C	D	E
24 Instructor adequately discussed current developments in the field	A	B	C	D	E

Evaluation of Course Work:

25 Extent of written feedback on written assignments	A	B	C	D	E
26 Degree to which written feedback was constructively critical	A	B	C	D	E
27 Value of feedback on oral presentations	A	B	C	D	E
28 Fairness and clarity of evaluation procedures	A	B	C	D	E

Academic contribution of course:

29 to thinking critically, weighing different views on complex issues	A	B	C	D	E
30 to understanding theory	A	B	C	D	E
31 to examining direct research evidence	A	B	C	D	E

Practical contribution of course:

32 to reflecting on skills and practice	A	B	C	D	E
33 developing new skills and practice	A	B	C	D	E
34 to integrating theory/research with skills/ practice	A	B	C	D	E
35 to your personal "growth & development"	A	B	C	D	E

Program Contribution of course:

36 Extent to which course integrates your ideas from practical work in other courses	A	B	C	D	E
37 Extent to which course encourages cooperative learning with your peers	A	B	C	D	E

38 Should the course be required?	definitely not	no opinion	definitel
39 Would you recommend the course to another ICS student, assuming it were optional?	definitely not	no opinion	definitel
40 Do you expect this course will help you in your future work and growth as a professional?	definitely not	no opinion	definitel

Course Work:

41 Hours/week required outside of class:	0-2,	3-5,	6-9,	10-12,	13+
42 Pages/week course reading	0-9,	10-19,	20-29,	30-49,	50+
43 Percentage of readings which were "academic" (e.g., Journal articles, textbooks)	0-19%,	20-39%,	40-59%,	60-79%,	80%+
44 Percentage of assigned readings completed	0-19%,	20-39%,	40-59%,	60-79%,	80%+
45 Percentage of classes attended	0-19%,	20-39%,	40-59%,	60-79%,	80%+
46 Written work: total # of pages (typed equivalent) you produced in the course	0-9,	10-19,	20-29,	30-49,	50+
47 Oral work: <u>total time</u> (minutes) you spent giving <u>formal</u> class presentations	0,	5-19,	20-59,	60-99,	100+

48	Oral work: time/week (minutes) you contributed informally to class discussions	0,	1-5,	6-10,	11-15, 16+
49	In terms of academic difficulty, relative to other ICS courses, this course was	1. very easy		3. medium	5. very hai
50	Relative to advanced undergraduate courses, this course was	1. very easy		3. medium	5. very ha:

Institute of Child Study
Course Evaluation

Written Answer Sheet

Course name _____

1. What I liked best about the course

2. What I liked least about the course

3. Comments on unique features of course not covered in general multiple choice survey (e.g.practice test administration, group projects, etc.)

4. Suggestions for improvement